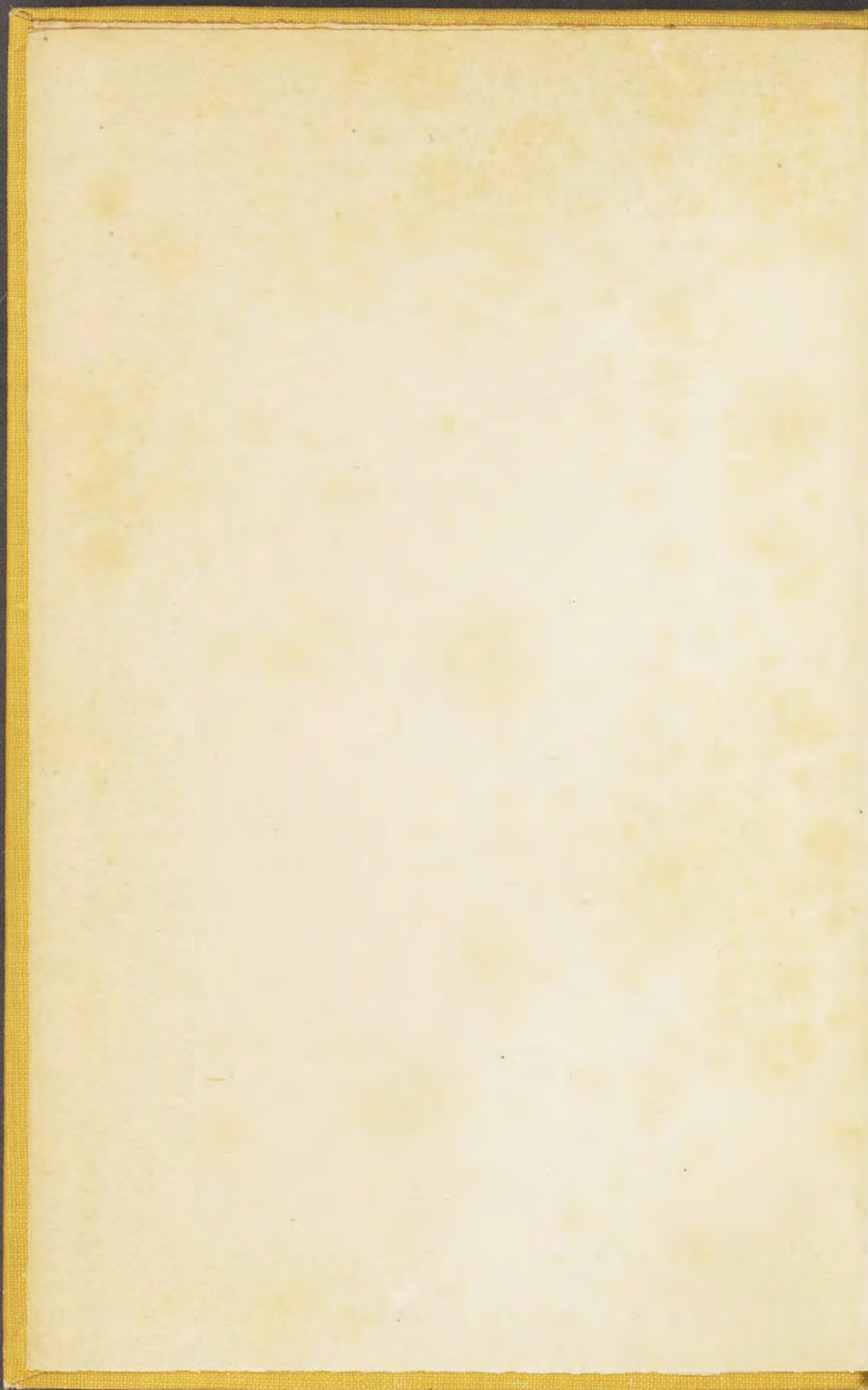


Garra Davis
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San Diego



EVERYBODY'S BOOK ON COLLECTING







SEVRES PORCELAIN BONBONNIERE, DECORATED WITH PAINTINGS BY DODIN AFTER
BOUCHER, WITH GOLD MOUNTS SUPPLIED BY THE KING'S JEWELLERS,
FOSSIN ET FILS.

Once the property of Mr. Alfred de Rothschild.
From an illustration kindly lent by Sir Edward Marshall Hall.



THE AMATEUR COLLECTOR

Everybody's Book on Collecting

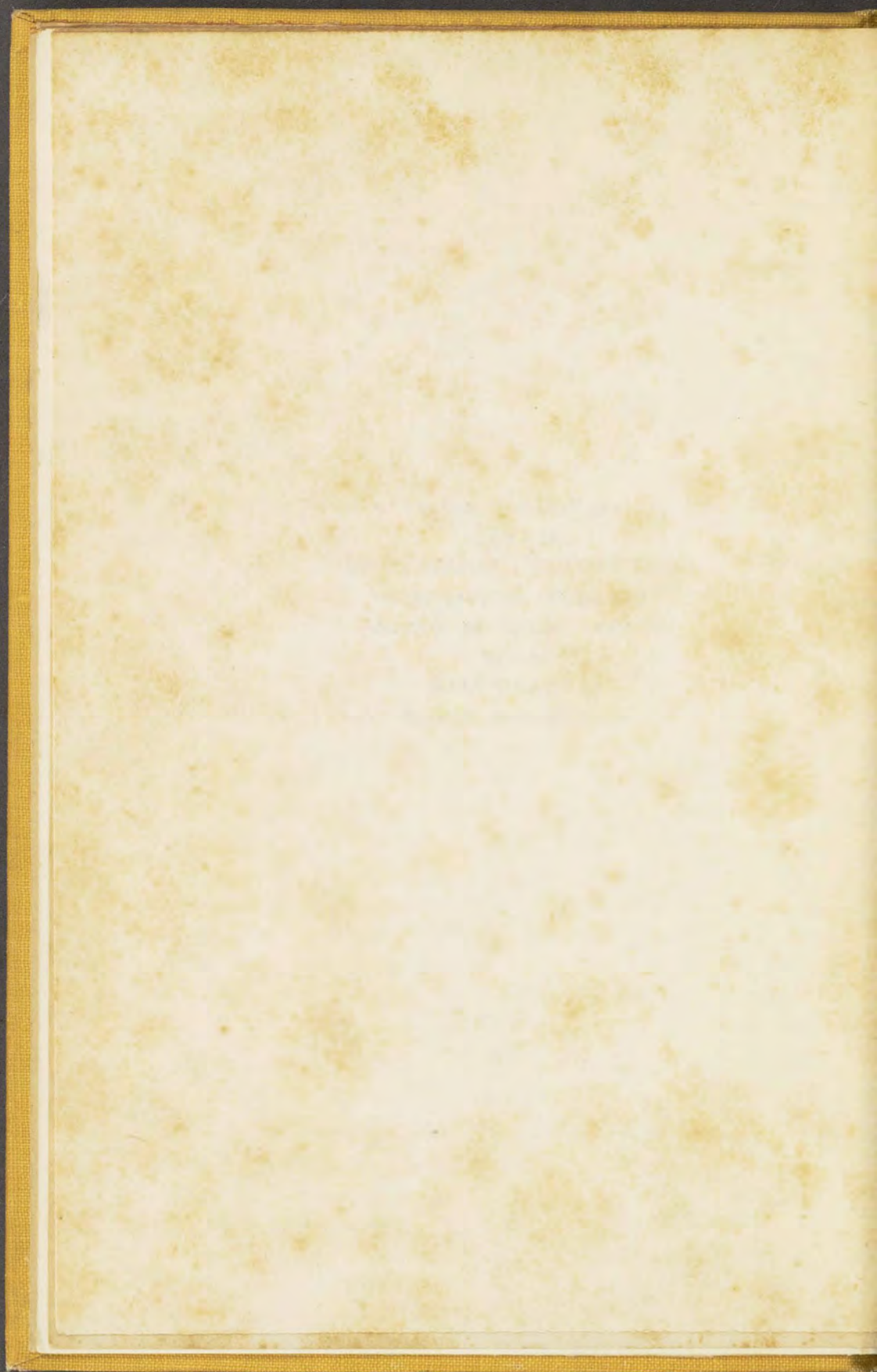
BY
DR. GEORGE C. WILLIAMSON

ILLUSTRATED

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TO THE PLEASANT MEMORY OF
ALFRED,
FIRST VISCOUNT NORTHCLIFFE,
WHO SUGGESTED THAT THESE
CHAPTERS SHOULD BE WRITTEN,
AND TO
BERNARD FALK
WITH GRATEFUL THANKS



PREFACE

COLLECTING is in the air. There are few persons who do not collect something.

There are, moreover, many persons who have various things in their houses, about which they are anxious to know something. Perchance they are books or prints, pieces of porcelain, old watches or clocks, diaries and deeds, portraits, letter-weights, newspapers, tokens or decanter labels.

A long and varied experience in collecting and in viewing other people's collections, has enabled me to gather up a certain amount of information which has proved of interest and importance to some collectors, and possessed of many of the necessary books of reference, I have been enabled to augment practical experience by allusions to the volumes written by other collectors and by notable experts, on various subjects.

For many months I contributed to the pages of the *Weekly Dispatch* on the advice of Lord Northcliffe, a series of articles, embodying some of the information I possess. The articles appear to have been appreciated, if I may judge from the enormous correspondence that poured in upon me concerning them. A large proportion of the writers asked that the articles should appear in more

permanent form, hence the issue of this book, by the kind permission of the proprietors of the paper in which the majority of them originally appeared.

Their issue in book form has enabled me to make certain corrections in them, to bring them more up to date, and to add slightly to their extent, including certain parts of them which had to be omitted, owing to the rigid limits of space afforded in the Press.

By intention, they did not deal with the more serious and important side of collecting, but rather to its lighter aspects. Pictures were, of necessity, omitted from their scope. To have included them would have meant increasing the articles to an abnormal size. Whether papers on collecting pictures, miniatures, drawings, enamels, sculpture, and such kindred subjects may appear later on, is a question for further consideration, but there are far more collectors of the less valuable treasures, and those which may be termed bric-a-brac, than there are of the costly and more elaborate works of art.

It has been thought desirable to mention in quite brief fashion such subjects as old silver, Sèvres porcelain, Henri Deux faience, in order to give a general estimate of their importance, but these and many other subjects could well be amplified at considerable length.

The chapters are, however, intended to skim over the surface of the subject, and to give general,

rather than special, information. Their original reception was extremely gratifying to me, and I hope that, in this altered form, they may prove of some service to persons who, like myself, are interested in collecting, and to those who are eager to know something about the things they collect and possess.

I have to thank Mr. Reginald Grundy, the Editor of *The Connoisseur*, for the considerate manner in which he has helped me with regard to the illustrations for this book. Most of them, with only one or two notable exceptions, have been placed by him at my disposal, and illustrate important and fine objects that have been referred to in the pages of his magazine. For the frontispiece I am indebted to Sir Edward Marshall Hall, who owns the colour block most generously lent to me. The two facsimile letters are from the wonderful collection of Clifford documents in the possession of Lord Hothfield. The illustration of the two pieces of Sheffield plate is taken from the famous book on that subject written by Mr. H. M. Veitch, and my acknowledgments are due to him and to his publishers, Messrs. G. Bell & Sons, for their consideration. The remaining illustrations have all been placed in my hands by Mr. Grundy.

GEORGE C. WILLIAMSON.

Burgh House, Hampstead,

March, 1923.

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EVERYBODY'S BOOK ON COLLECTING

CHAPTER I

COLLECTORS AND COLLECTING

EVERYBODY collects something nowadays. The difficulty is to find something that no one else is collecting and to gather up a collection that will not only give pleasure and be an enterprise, but also will some day, if needs demand, fetch more than the modest sum already expended.

Collecting can be not only a joy, a solace, a refreshment, but an investment. For example, Sir John Day bought the paintings of the Barbizon School, the works of such men as Diaz, Mauve and Maris, and his family reaped great advantage from his discretion. Look again at Mr. Yates Thompson who has bought manuscripts wisely and sold many of them for sums far greater than he gave for them ; or look at the many collectors of mezzotints and drawings whose care in buying has been amply repaid in the auction-rooms.

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Then again there is the delight of purchasing at last what you have been seeking for a long time, or of completing sets, as Mr. Morgan once did when he bought from a casual caller, out of a newspaper parcel, a Sèvres vase which matched one he had possessed for years and for which he would gladly, to complete the pair, have paid at auction an enormous sum.

I myself had an odd and curious happening of this kind.

When a schoolboy I bought, for fourpence, an old volume of a rare county history, published in 1719, out of a box of old books at a stall. It was the third volume, rather well bound, and in clean condition. The work was published in five volumes. I had always desired to possess it, but could never find any other odd volumes. Five-and-twenty years afterwards my father, who, like myself, had long desired a copy of this particular book, marched in with great triumph, having purchased in Reading for a large sum, a complete set of the same book, in beautiful order. He and I looked it over, and I drew his attention to the fact that the third volume was bound just a little differently to the others, the variation being slight, but quite clear when it was recognised. We went through the set of five books, page by page, and at the end of the last found a note by the owner, whose name was inscribed in each, to the effect that he had lent

the third volume soon after the publication of the book, that is to say probably in about 1750, to a friend, and had never been able to regain it. In consequence, he had purchased an odd third volume, and had it bound closely as possible to the other four. I at once thought of my own third volume and declared I believed I had the missing one. My father laughed the idea to scorn, saying that the chances were a million to one that the books could have ever come together, or that the son should buy the odd volume in London, and the father the remaining four in Reading, but on sending home for the volume, my suggestion was found to be the correct one; mine was the missing volume which had been separated from its fellows for over a hundred and fifty years, and which also had its owner's signature in it. The result is, that this interesting set of books, which still remains in the family (although not, I regret, in my own possession) has two Volumes III, and the whole story inscribed inside one of them. This is one of the thrills of collecting, and every collector will understand the delight that such a circumstance brings out.

Changes in value offer another series of romances. We have recently witnessed some extraordinary ones at the Britwell sale. There was a man called Narcissus Luttrell, who died in 1732, a collector and a bibliographer, who

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bought many books and broadsides, forming altogether, in Chelsea, an extraordinary collection. He had a habit of marking inside the books the price he had given for them, and for a copy of George Chapman's "Shadow of Night" he paid Threepence (3d.), and put the price on the title page. On February 6th of this year that book sold for £270—rather a substantial increase on the original price! On the third day's sale of the Britwell library, another of Luttrell's books came up, Gale's "Pyramus and Thisbe," in which he had marked the price he had given for it as Twopence (2d.), and this book fetched £617. If, however, this is going too far back in changes in value, take another great collector, Richard Heber, who died as recently as 1833, and many of whose books appeared in the Britwell Library. At his sale, which took place at Sotheby's in 1834-5 and 6, a copy of Henry Petowes' "Faire Lady of Britaine" sold for £4 19s. ; at the Britwell sale it realised £300. Another of his books by Dekker, called "Warres, Warres, Warres," sold for £6 2s. 6d. Dr. Rosenbach gave 250 guineas for it the other day.

Two more instances may be given in the Chalmers sale: only eighty years ago a book of Willoughby's sold for 10 guineas, this year it fetched £1,950, and a Heber book which sold, in 1834, for £5 10s., now sold for £960.

A still further instance of romance in the

way of book collecting, is provided by a tiny volume, only measuring five inches by three and a half, found in an attic at Sir Charles Isham's house at Lamport, about 1890. The book contained four little pamphlets and fetched £3,600. These are, of course, the exceptional romances in book buying, but there are others that are quite as interesting, both in that section of collecting and in others. The most curious occurrence in the Britwell sale was provided by the Marlowe book of "Hero and Leander," which Sotheby's did not even illustrate and made no fuss about. It turned out to be the only copy in existence. In 1836 it fetched £4 6s.—to-day £1,810. Dr. Rosenbach found out this fact and of course bought the book.

It has been my fortunate experience to come into contact with many of the great collectors of the day. For Mr. Pierpont Morgan, who was an old and personal friend, I was able to compile several of his catalogues and to travel all over Europe in search of material which he desired for these volumes, and in regard to his treasures I have heard from him many interesting stories.

He it was who bought from Mr. Salting that amazing Red Hawthorn vase that was the glory of his collection. Salting had bought it, I believe, for £400. He sold it for £900, and after Mr. Morgan's death Duveens gave a huge price for

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it. He also it was who bought for a small sum a miniature of a woman and child that I opened and found inside a bit of the handwriting of Napoleon III, saying that it was a picture of his mother and himself when he was a baby.

He showed me once an old dilapidated, rare book. He had sent it to be carefully repaired and inside the binding two unique broadsides had been found worth five times what he had given for the volume !

Mr. George Salting, the benefactor of the South Kensington Museum, was also a friend with whom I came into contact very frequently and who dined with me, and I believe I was the person who induced him to commence to buy miniatures.

How curious were his rooms in St. James's Street : every chair covered with precious things, while he even had to lie on half his bed because on the other half were some rock crystal vases for which he could find no other place, and he told me he lay very quiet for fear of shaking them off the bed.

Salting had strange fits of strict economy. He returned once from Paris one day before a great sale was over for fear of losing the value of his return ticket. When he sold his famous Red Hawthorn vase he was afraid that he might suddenly lose his huge fortune and die a pauper. He often walked in heavy rain to a dinner party, as he " really could not afford a taxicab," he said.

I have met many of the great American collectors, and have visited their houses, especially Mr. Widener, Mr. Gould, Mr. Frick, Mr. Pratt, and others of the benefactors of the great museums of America, and I believe that Mr. Widener would never have bought Rembrandt's "Mill" but for my telling him one day when I was in his gallery that there were a certain few pictures in England which no money would buy, and a number of great collectors who would never be persuaded to part with their treasures. He asked me to name one or two and, rather unwisely, I put Rembrandt's "Mill" first, saying that I believed nothing would induce Lord Lansdowne to part with it. The old man replied to me, with a chuckle, and said, "We shall see"; and it was not a very long time after that I had a letter from him, in the course of which he said, "Do you remember talking to me about Rembrandt's 'Mill'? It is now hanging in this gallery."

I have met Mr. Huntington, who had just bought "The Blue Boy," and is building a palace in California for his books. He will have the greatest private collection in the world, and all students will be welcome to go and see them if they care to take the long journey to Los Angeles.

Mrs. Colis P. Huntington, whom he married, I have often seen, and admired her glorious furniture and the superb Lawrence portrait group she possesses, and her wonderful Polish rugs.

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She gave her son, Archer Huntington, as a New Year gift, a great Velazquez portrait, the finest in America, and paid very many thousands for it. I have seen it hanging in his gallery in New York, at the Hispanic Society's rooms.

Mr. Henry Clay Frick so loved his pictures that, when he left New York for Eagle Rock, the best of the pictures went with him in a steel covered motor van, into which they slid on steel rollers into velvet-covered partitions, and his great works by Hals and Rembrandt, Hobbema, Vermeer, Reynolds, Romney, Titian and Turner were all rehung at Prides Crossing, where I saw them with delight and admired the glorious taste and superb means that had enabled him to acquire them. He was Morgan's great antagonist, and all his pictures now belong to the City of New York.

Mr. Gladstone, in the very midst of his great political efforts, gave considerable attention to the study of pottery made at Leeds, and I remember having a long conversation about it with him, in which he amazed me by the knowledge he had brought together, and which almost seemed as though information about the Leeds pottery had been the sole object of his life and that nothing else had ever interfered with it. He recognised in a flash a genuine piece of Leeds pottery, differentiating it from some Wedgwood ware which very much resembled it. He told me of a very

rare catalogue of Leeds ware which, at that moment, was for sale, and on his advice I bought it, at a price which was fifty times less than its present value ; and he said that the joy of being able to pass from the turmoil of politics and the anxieties of Parliament to a quiet contemplation of the cream-coloured ware which he so loved, was a source of great solace and rest to him, and in searching some of the antique shops for a new example of Leeds pottery he was able to refresh, in fact, to re-create his mind, and then come back with a renewed zest to what was, after all, the main purpose of his life. In this he spoke no more than the bare truth. Every collector will agree that the joy of being able to throw off worries and think about the objects with which he tries to fill his house (often to the grave concern of his wife), is one of the best joys of life, and if, with that, he can add the delight of picking up a bargain, such as a Whistler catalogue that I once bought for a penny and is now worth very many pounds, the joy is one sure to be the greater.

CHAPTER II

CHELSEA CHINA FIGURES

IN the London Museum, amongst other treasures, there is a wonderful Chelsea group, that was once on a little round table, under a glass case, in the front window of a Brighton lodging-house. A dealer passing by caught sight of it, went in, and took the rooms at once for a week ; and after he had been there a few days, by the help of a substantial sum of money, and some clever cajolery, the Chelsea group changed hands. He then had occasion to be called to London, gave up the rooms, and quickly sold the group for a very large sum of money. It passed through different collectors' hands, and is now at rest in the Museum.

When I was a boy I saw on the mantelpiece in the sitting-room of an old farm-house, two tiny white jugs, representing goats and a bee. They belonged to the farmer's wife, they had a triangular mark at the bottom, and were dated 1745. They were very rare, because they represented some of the earliest products of the Chelsea factory. The farmer's wife knew they were important, and would not sell them. She died

suddenly, one of the jugs was broken all to pieces, the other was used as a milk-jug by someone who knew nothing of its value, and that also perished! There are very few still remaining of these goat jugs. Some have the word "Chelsea" and the date at the back of them, and the triangular mark. They are said to have been copied from an old English silver jug, which is, I believe, now in the Brighton Museum, but whether that jug is quite genuine is a matter of some doubt. They were the earliest dated pieces, but probably the factory began fifteen years or so earlier still.

The plain white specimens, without any colour, and with the triangle mark, are the most precious of the Chelsea productions, and every collector aims at obtaining them. One of the most beautiful examples that I know of is in the possession of a doctor in Harley Street, who has a very choice collection of Chelsea figures and groups.

There are really four periods in Chelsea: the first I have mentioned, the second is distinguished by the introduction of the anchor mark, the third is when Sprimont became manager of the works, and the fourth is when the glaze became harder and stronger, and the whole details of the figures more accurate. Sometimes Bow figures are confused with Chelsea. The two works were in existence about the same time, and they were both in their turn bought up by Duesbury, and then, by reason of the transfer to Derby, Chelsea

figures became known as Chelsea-Derby figures. If one compares the two sets of groups, one sees that fine Bow figures have been subjected to the use of a tool, that there are sharp edges where the tool has cut the paste away, especially in undercutting, whereas Chelsea was turned out from the moulds so accurately that it seldom needed the use of a tool. The quality of Bow is bluer than that of fine Chelsea, which is a cold, splendid white. The collector must look for the three or four seggar marks, the little dark spots where the figure rested on a piece of coarse porcelain while it was being baked in the kiln, and occasionally a tiny drop of the glaze will be found behind the group, where it has not quite fallen off, and this, by the way, never happens in the modern reproductions. There are few things more glorious in the way of porcelain than Chelsea figures or groups. Look at the wonderful set of Muses in the London Museum. Look at the two superb groups lent by Mrs. Salting, the hurdy-gurdy player and the monkey, and the flute players, with a background of what collectors call *bocage*. Look also at the two groups representing foxes, and at the one depicting the four corners of the globe and a pyramid, and examine also some of the lovely figures and groups in the new porcelain gallery in the British Museum, in order to acquire a knowledge of what is the best. Note how splendid and brilliant was the gold on the old



PAIR OF OLD CHELSEA CHINA FIGURES.



groups. By the way, I am told that Mr. Salting, or the dealer who sold to him, waited seven years before he was able to acquire the companion group to one already possessed, and then, quite unexpectedly, it turned up at Christie's, and had been all the while in a little country house in the recesses of Cornwall.

Candlesticks are amongst the most precious things in Chelsea, but one must see that the candle-piece is removable, or is pierced; the modern copyist forgets that when the candlesticks were made, candles were precious, and were burned down to the last inch, and then the top was taken out or the piece of candle poked away from it. Several of the modern copies would not even hold candles at all, they are too small.

Perhaps the rarest of all things in Chelsea are the bouquets of flowers; there are two beauties in the London Museum, given by that great benefactor Mr. Joicey, whose death occurred in 1919. Many of the finest pieces of Chelsea were designed by the sculptor Roubillac, notably the groups of two lovers.

The collector will do well to invest in Sir Arthur Church's catalogue of porcelain, in the Schreiber catalogue, and in books by Hobson and Bemrose and King. From them he will then learn all he desires to know when he starts collecting these fascinating little figures.

CHAPTER III

OLD GLASSES

IN the autumn of 1907 there was a house-party at Oxburgh Hall, the seat of Sir Henry Bedingfeld, and the writer whom we all knew as "Marmaduke" was amongst the party. He told me that one afternoon, searching for some long-lost vases, he discovered a quantity of curious-looking glass in one of the pantries, which had not been moved for a generation. All the party, in search of amusement, went down to have a look at it, and the result of the visit was to find eleven pieces of Jacobite glass, three of great rarity, one unique. The glasses were exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and since then fetched a price running into many hundreds of pounds.

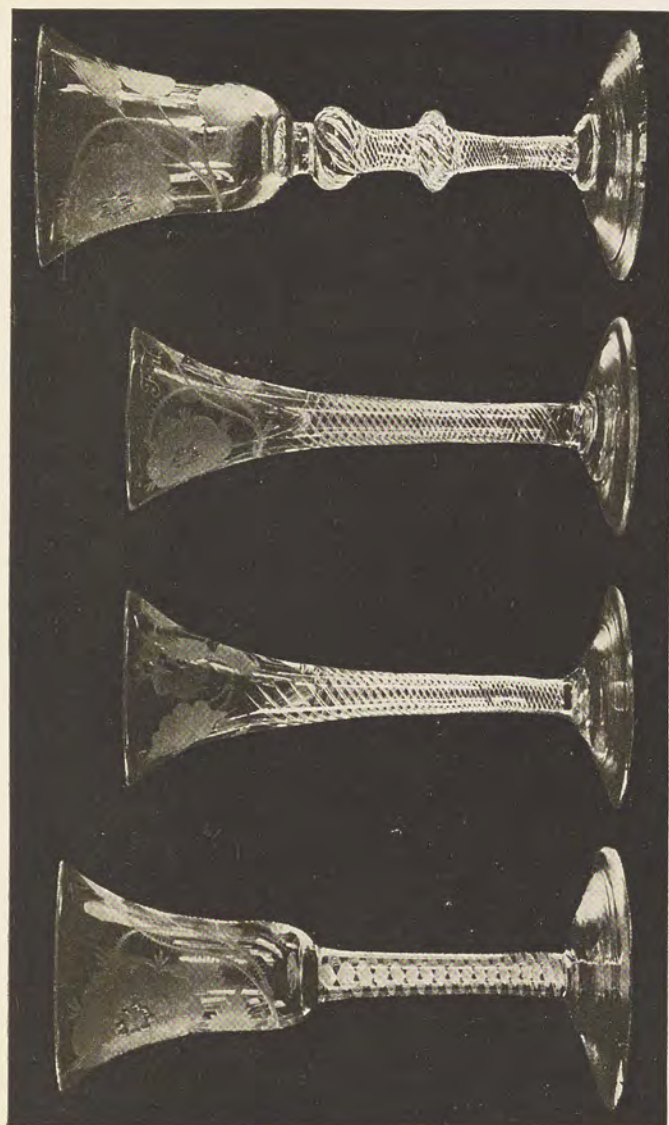
In 1912 some things in an old manor house at Derby were to be sold. There was nothing of very special importance, as all the choice things had been removed, but in the kitchen was a box of old glasses, which a dealer agreed to take without counting them, at a shilling apiece. One was a splendid Jacobite glass, and later on it sold at Sotheby's for a hundred and eighty guineas.

In a small china-cupboard at Woking was discovered, in 1920, a Jacobite glass, for which the owner in ordinary times would gladly have taken a sovereign. It fetched two hundred at Sotheby's, and another one, very similar to it, a hundred and seventy-five.

A Mr. Cater, of Colchester, formed a collection of old glass. He said he only gave a few shillings apiece for what he had, but the little collection sold for fifteen hundred ; and a still more remarkable thing was the sale of the Martin Gibbs collection in 1919, for Mr. Gibbs stated he had never paid more than half-a-crown a piece for a single specimen, and a wonderful pair of glasses fetched thirty-five pounds, another pair thirty-four pounds, a single glass fifty-two pounds, and the whole seventy-one lots nearly eight hundred pounds. For one of Mr. Hartshorne's greatest treasures in the way of Jacobite relics he gave a shilling at St. Leonards, in 1901. It is therefore worth while collecting old glass, but it is not particularly easy to do it just now, because so many people have taken up with this fascinating amusement and prices rule high, but let the collector be advised to go about the country into small shops and smaller houses, and not just at the moment frequent the auction rooms, if bargains are desired. Moreover, my advice would be to try to stick to one special section of glass. If it is wine glasses, Jacobite ones are what are particularly desired, or the

beautiful ones with twists in their stems. Another man may collect liqueur glasses, or rummers, tumblers, ale glasses, coaching glasses that have no foot, or the little dumpy glasses that are so frequently to be found in eighteenth-century glass, and many another will go in for Irish, especially for Waterford glass.

Here a word of warning. Do not imagine that Waterford glass is distinguished by a pale blue tinge. There is *some* Waterford glass with that tinge, owing perhaps to an excess of lead, or even, possibly, to an accident in the pot. Do not fancy that all Cork glass has a pale yellowish tinge—that also may result from an accident. A great deal of the finest Waterford glass is clear white, but as a rule it has a ring that is almost unmistakable to a collector, and moreover, a brilliancy which is remarkable. The blue-tinged Waterford glass often has a curious bloom upon it, which can be wiped off, but which recurs, and it has a strange and unmistakable feel about it, quite different from modern glass, but quite impossible to convey in words. Many persons jump to the conclusion that because a piece has that beautiful blue tinge, it is an exceptional treasure. That may be so. Probably most of the blue-tinged glass was Waterford, or at least Irish, but by far the best Irish glass was not blue at all, and moreover, it is exceedingly difficult to determine what is Irish and what is English



STUART PERIOD ENGRAVED WINE GLASSES.



glass, and probably most critics, including Mr. Dudley Westropp, who certainly wrote the greatest book on the subject, will say that it is impossible to be quite certain except in a very few instances about many pieces. Waterford blue happens to be the rage, and it is certainly delightful in colour, but it is only a passing fancy, and Irish or English white glass is really more wonderful.

Many Irish lustres are of far greater beauty than any bit of Waterford blue can be, and decanters, bottles, and sweetmeat cups, jugs, dishes, bowls, posset cups, flower-vases, and even christening bowls and chalices that were made in Ireland have got the Irish characteristic of being heavy, of ringing with a wonderful sound, of having a special depth of tone, but very often have not a trace of the blue tinge or the yellowish tinge that less knowledgeable collectors are apt to think *must* distinguish Waterford or Cork glass.

Furthermore, some of the glass in Irish houses and Irish collections may not have been a home product, as the factories in Ireland were few and small, and did not begin till about 1780, and English glass was imported into Ireland in considerable quantities. A few of the pieces of authentic Waterford glass are absolutely pure white.

The joy of a collection of glass is that it can be used, and nothing sets off a dinner-table so

splendidly ; and again, that one's sense of colour can be appealed to, as the beautiful purple, red and green glasses are very decorative. Look always for the pontil mark on the bottom ; notice the turned-over flap on the foot ; see that the spirals never run from right to left, and are always a little irregular ; watch for lumps and irregularities in the make ; look out for the brilliant clear colour ; and, above all, take an expert's advice in the case of anything particularly precious, for glass is being forged in all directions, and hundreds of the items that are offered in the antique shops are absolutely modern, and are not worth looking at for a single minute.

I advise collectors to refer to Mr. Dudley Westropp's standard book and the volume by Mrs. Stannas on " Old Irish Glass," Bates's " Old English Glass," Wilmer's " Early English Glass," to Yoxall's " Collecting Old Glass," and to Coenen's account of the Willet-Holthuysen Museum in Amsterdam, where some remarkably beautiful examples of wine glasses may be seen and admired.

CHAPTER IV

OLD PRINTS

A MORE popular branch of collecting than that comprised under the title of old prints, it would be difficult to find, and yet, amongst amateur collectors, there is often some misapprehension as to the different classes of prints. There are probably few branches of collecting in which there is greater opportunity for bargains.

I was shown by one of the London dealers some years ago a splendid impression of Rembrandt's etching, "The Three Trees." He did not know that I had seen it some months before, fastened into a child's scrap-book, which had belonged to the grandfather of the man who sold it. Its margin, unfortunately, had been injured, and in a valuable print, by the way, almost as much depends on the margin as on the print, but it was a splendid object, and but for the interposition of a collector, would have been torn up in a nursery.

A fine series of Piranesi's "Dungeons" was found in a country sale, fastened on to a large six-fold planish covered screen. Both sides of

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the screen were so decorated. It was not easy to steam the prints off, but they were got off, and the new owner had a wonderful series. Quite recently, in an auction-room, a framed print was bought, which formed one of a series of six. The owner, when he got it home, discovered to his great delight that at the back of the print were the remaining five out of the six, and that it had been the previous owner's habit to exhibit, in the same frame, first one of the prints, and then another. The six had been sold at far less than the full value of one.

The oddest circumstance, however, connected with prints, that I ever heard of was with regard to a series called "The Procession." One only was sold in the auction sale, but the purchaser found that the back of the frame opened with two buttons, and so, wondering whether the owner had possessed the other prints, he waited till the close of the sale, and from a lumber-room bought various bundles of stuff and one odd rectangular frame. In the bundles he found all the remaining prints of "The Procession," including the one which is of a different size, and that exactly fitted the empty frame, which he had bought for a shilling.

Prints fall naturally into four groups: there are wood engravings, line engravings, mezzotints and etchings—and in with the etchings one may include stipple prints, which are not etchings, but

which partake a little of their character. The wood engravings are of course the oldest. Whether the two prints dated 1418 and 1423 (of which one is in the Rylands collection and the other in London) are the progenitors of the entire series, cannot be stated quite definitely, because some critics believe that in one or both of these two woodcuts the figures have been tampered with. They were both, by the way, I believe, discovered inside old bindings.

Wood engraving, however, certainly commenced in the fifteenth century, and two of its greatest exponents were Dürer in the old days, and Bewick in more modern times. It would not be easy to collect Dürer's prints, they are precious and very well known. Bewick's are more likely to be met with, but a great joy is to collect English illustrations from 1857 down to 1870, or the delightful magazines and books, such as "Once a Week," "Good Words," "The Poems of Tennyson," and so on, in which the real woodcuts of that amazing period called "The Sixties" appeared. To find the drawings for these is difficult, because in making the woodcut, the drawing was generally cut away, but the proofs are sometimes to be got, and are well worth securing. Woodcut engraving is a thing of the past to a great extent: process has driven it out. Box trees, on such places as Box Hill, near Dorking, are no longer carefully protected for

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the sake of the fine wood which was the best of all on which to engrave, and probably, except in rare instances, wood engravings will never come back.

Line engraving, whether on copper or steel, commenced with the Florentine engravers who, after ornamenting gold work, used to fill up the hollows with the black enamel to render the design more clear. The goldsmith did not want to put the hard enamel in until he was certain the effect would be all right, and therefore he took a sulphur cast of his engraving which was called a *niello*, and filled up the lines in the sulphur with lamp-black, so that he could see how the work was going on. Then he found by using damp paper and pressing on the plate, he could make a sort of print, which helped him even more considerably, and so began plate printing from an engraving. It is the reverse of wood work: the wood engraver cuts away round the line, the plate printer cuts the line, and the very word "to engrave" comes from an old German word meaning "to dig." Let us take Schongauer, Dürer and Vosterman as representatives of the old line engravers. Doo and Sherborn as representing the modern school.

In etching the work is done with an acid instead of with a tool, and there are various methods of coating the plate with the ground, as it is called, before the artist begins to draw upon it what is

to be the etching. He can do it with a dabber, he can do it with a roller and smoke his plate, he can put the material on in solution, but in each case he proceeds afterwards to remove part of the surface and then uses the acid as the engraver has used the burin to cut into the plate. He can work "in line," he can work "in line and shade," he can work in "shade and texture," and these are the three principal methods of etching.

Rembrandt is, perhaps, the greatest exponent of the art. Meryon, the poor lunatic Frenchman, who had first of all to give away his prints and then to sell for a few coppers, prints which now realise hundreds of pounds, is an almost equally great exponent of this wonderful art, and Whistler's most triumphant and most permanent work was done in etching. The works of these men are very difficult to obtain at moderate prices, but are worth striving for, and if the collector has any idea of making a collection of etchings, there are works by many other artists worth securing.

CHAPTER V

SÈVRES PORCELAIN

THE collector should always aim at the best. He may not secure what he wants at first, but perhaps he will in time; there is nothing like aiming high. In consequence, every collector of porcelain should try to obtain an example of Sèvres.

Ruling out the so-called Henri II ware, of which there are said to be only sixty-five pieces in existence, Sèvres is the next important. The factory made no attempt to cater for the ordinary person, the Sèvres factory was a royal preserve, and kings and queens used Sèvres porcelain, when they wanted to make presents to rival sovereigns, or to great people.

Almost all Sèvres is marked with a double "L," and inside appear the letter which gives the year. The collector is sure to be offered what is called "biscuit de Sèvres," especially white biscuit figures, and the double "L" may be pointed out upon these figures, as a mark of their genuine character. It may generally be said that it is the very opposite, as practically no biscuit figures ever bore the double "L" at all.

Then he must be careful that he does not buy what is called "Baldock Sèvres." There was a Mr. Baldock, rather less than a hundred years ago, the big dealer of his day. He bought large quantities of white Sèvres, either without decoration at all, or with very little, and he took off all the original decoration with powerful acids, and then employed an artist to repaint the Sèvres porcelain in the glorious greens, blues and pinks which were in use at the factory. He did it very well, and even clever collectors have been taken in by his copies, because the original ware was genuine Sèvres—but real Sèvres must be not only made, *but decorated*, at the factory.

Then, again, beware of the artists' signs, because the great artists of Sèvres painted their initials on their ware, and the date is known when each of them started work. I once saw a piece of Sèvres, that was to be offered to Mr. Morgan. It bore the date letter of 1759, but the initial letter of an artist who did not start work at Sèvres till 1763, and I was able to tell the person who was going to offer it that he had better get rid of it at once, as it was a forgery. Then I was shown a piece, marked with the double letters "HH," signifying 1785, and decorated by a painter who died in the seventeen-seventies—and that, I am rather afraid, entered into a small local museum, and is there still.

My first acquaintance with Sèvres porcelain

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arose in a somewhat romantic way. In 1856, the eldest son of an English earl died quite unexpectedly, leaving only daughters, and the title in consequence would have to pass to a great-nephew, whose mother the existing earl very strenuously disliked. At the moment of the death of the eldest son, the old earl was building a great dower-house, with a long gallery, in which to exhibit the famous pictures and vases he had bought. When his son died, he sent word that the work was to be stopped, not a ladder was to be moved, not a hod of mortar disturbed, not a brick nor a piece of wood touched, but every man was to leave his work at once.

Moreover, he said that the family house was to be closed up, and the blinds drawn down, and he never resided there again, and he lived on and on till 1870, so that, when I first went into it, the blinds were glued to the window by the dead flies, and the curtains fell to pieces when you touched them.

I also rambled all over the great unfinished house, to the imminent danger of my neck. The whole thing had steadily rotted away, but there was a small lodge, where the eldest son and his children had sometimes lived, and in that were stored pictures and treasures of enormous value.

The pictures were too big to be hung on its walls, and stood round on the floor, the vases of Sèvres and the bronzes crowded the mantel-

pieces, and nothing was moved until the old nobleman died in 1870.

A faithful housekeeper was put in charge, the house was watched night and day, there were fierce dogs on the premises, no one save one or two specially favoured persons, of whom I was one, was allowed to enter, nothing was allowed to be moved.

The lady's work-basket and her needlework perished on the table on which she had left it. There were marks of all the objects on the floors and shelves. Everything was kept dusted but nothing was moved. All the blinds were drawn, and the beautiful blue curtains shrouded the windows, and gradually fell to pieces.

The lodge was kept in spotless order, and no one knew, save the old housekeeper and her two faithful servants, what amazing treasures there were in that tiny house.

There were great silver vases ; there were large pieces of sculpture ; there were splendid vases of Sèvres of the very finest period ; there was wonderful furniture ; everything of high importance, and the old man made a will to prevent any of the things ever going at any time to the man who would succeed him in the title.

He tied them up to his granddaughters, but even they were not allowed to use or sell them, and then the reversion went on to a great charity, but after he died in 1870, the Settled Estates Act

permitted of some change being made, and in 1891, I had the privilege of looking with great care at all the things, and then it was that I acquired some knowledge of Sèvres porcelain.

Later on, I watched the things sell at Christie's, and I delighted in the fact that the old man's offensive will was able to be partially set aside, and that the new earl regained many of the splendid things of which his great-uncle had tried to deprive him.

If only those pictures and that Sèvres could have come into the market now, how different would have been their values! They fetched good prices then, about £1,500, but nothing to what they would have fetched now.

There were Sèvres vases eighteen inches high. There was a blue vase twenty inches high, and another wonderful one a little less. There were glorious Gros-bleu coffee-cups, and two superb Gros-bleu vases. The coffee-cups fetched about fifty pounds for the four.

I saw them later on in America, and I believe the owner gave six hundred pounds for them, and one pink vase, which then only sold for three or four pounds, afterwards fetched nearly three hundred. Sèvres china is worth collecting.

CHAPTER VI

OLD SILVER

THE collector of old silver has the advantage over his rivals of being more likely to render his collection of pecuniary advantage to him, but he must be possessed of important information, must be careful in his purchases, and ought to have a safe in which to deposit his treasures of silver-ware.

There are bargains to be obtained, even in the precious metals. Breakfasting some years ago with a friend, I remarked on the beauty of his egg-spoons. "Sixpence each," he told me, and my reply was that surely they were silver. "Quite so, but that was all I gave for them at a country sale. They are French of the eighteenth century, and I happened to be familiar with Rosenberg's work and in consequence recognised as silver what the auctioneer declared was only electro-plate."

A man whom I knew quite well purchased some years ago, at an auction sale, an enormous venison dish and cover, large enough to hold a haunch. No one dreamed that it could possibly be silver, it was so huge, but he had seen the rare Exeter

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Hall mark, and carried it off for a five-pound note, making a magnificent profit, even at melting price, upon his curious purchase.

Perhaps spoons are the best things to which a collector can devote his attention. The celebrated Staniforth set of spoons, dated 1519, only fetched sixty-two guineas in 1855, and is practically unrivalled. It was sold some few years ago for a very considerable sum—very many hundreds.

The earliest known dated piece of English silver is a spoon dated 1445. The earliest piece with the London Hall mark is 1488, a spoon that was in the Staniforth collection. This is not to say that there is no English silver earlier than this, for there are two amazing pieces, belonging to the latter half of the fourteenth century, which belonged to the late Lord Carysfort, and were picked up in Whittlesea Mere. They are a censer and incense boat, and they and the William of Wykeham crozier are perhaps the finest examples of very early silver work—although, of course, earlier than that, comes the Saxon work of the City sceptre, surrounding its crystal shaft, which is much older still.

Then, of course, there is the interesting series of bowls, called mazers, the spotted wood of which they are made taking its name from the same source as that from which we get the word "measles." These date from the thirteenth century, are executed in fine silver, and very



SILVER GILT STANDING CUP AND COVER, 1606.
Belonging to the Corporation of Portsmouth.



occasionally come into the market. They were the bowls and cups of the time.

The collector can hardly hope to come upon an Elizabethan service, such as that which was made from the loot of the Armada, and hidden away for a couple of generations, and then sold at Christie's for eleven thousand five hundred guineas, but he may come across some small pieces of great value, because the price of fine old silver is steadily going up in importance.

He must, however, be acquainted with the fact that there are hall-marks to be looked for, and he must know something of the special marks that were given by the provincial assay offices, such as those of Newcastle, Chester, Exeter and Norwich or Sheffield.

He must know that, in connection with Chester, there were sometimes five hall-marks, and sometimes six. He must remember that in London there are five hall-marks from 1784, and preceding that date, as a rule, four.

He must remember that the leopard under one of the marks is crowned until 1822, and after that has no crown, and that the alphabets that give the date letter have only twenty letters in them, instead of twenty-six, except once, in 1696, when there are but nineteen.

Then, he must know all about the Higher Standard mark, when all plate between March, 1697, and the end of 1719 had to be of higher

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value than the coinage, to prevent clipping, and is marked with the Britannia and the lion's head erased.

If he finds it without the lion's head, he must know it was intended to be exported, and in his pocket-book he should have a list of the date letters, and notes as to the shapes of the shields in which they are contained. Very often, these can be obtained from Whitaker's Almanack.

There are some wonderful pieces of plate in existence. The City Companies of London have amazing treasures, and so have many of the provincial Corporations. The election cup of Winchester, which is proved to have been made in Queen Mary's time by the Marygold that can be seen inside it, is a very notable thing, but the collector must always bear in mind when pieces of silver were introduced into use. I have seen a fish slice dated 1712, when there were no fish slices. I have heard of dessert knives with a date of Queen Anne's time, or William the Third's, and I knew a collector who once begged his silversmith to obtain for him an Elizabethan coffee-pot with a black handle, entirely forgetting that such a thing it would be impossible to find ; it was like another collector who begged a dealer to find him an Elizabethan hat and umbrella stand, and who, like the first-named one, was possessed of money without knowledge.

In Lord Swaythling's collection I saw an

extraordinary ostrich-egg cup, given to a parson by his parishioners in the City in 1623, "for his painstaking with us by his often preaching." I wonder whether it was intended in an ironic sense! It was a curious way of throwing an egg at an orator.

A piece of plate has recently come to light that was engraved by Hogarth when he was apprenticed to Gamble. I believe it will be illustrated in a new book on Hogarth, but I quite expect that more pieces of Hogarth's work will turn up.

If the collector is lucky enough to get hold of an Irish silver ring, do not let him call it a "potato ring," its right title is a "dish ring." It should be different in size whether turned towards the top or the bottom, and it was intended to hold the hot dishes, and protect the polish of the table from them. It certainly often held a wooden bowl containing potatoes in their skins, because they were served in this fashion in Ireland, but just as frequently, it held other dishes, and yet certain collectors, who do not understand the reason, will always talk of it as an "Irish potato ring."

CHAPTER VII

STAINED AND PAINTED GLASS

I HAD an opportunity some time ago of seeing a collection of pieces of stained and painted glass that had been made by an antiquary specially interested in that subject. A great walker, he made a habit of walking and driving about various country districts of the South of England, and in various places he picked up, from time to time, examples of old stained and painted glass.

Pursuing this hobby for many years, he eventually disposed of several of his choicer pieces for a considerable sum. He made a point of visiting churches that were to be restored, well knowing by experience that both incumbents, architects and builders were often very careless respecting old glass.

Sometimes they cared very little about it, sometimes they forgot all about it; and he was able to buy pieces that were discarded and, sometimes more or less complete lead lights, that were considered unimportant.

He used to talk to the various cottagers, and sometimes found that during previous restorations,

they had rescued odd bits of glass, or lights, and had set them into their own windows, or had preserved them in some other way. By dint of exploring out-of-the-way villages, he gathered together a collection quite remarkable and important.

In later years there has been a wider appreciation of the beauty of old glass. It is not as easy as it was in his time to form such a collection, but the beauty of the objects is undeniable.

There is still, unfortunately, a great deal of carelessness and indifference regarding the more or less damaged windows, or odd lights, which appear here and there, and which are regarded by those who are repairing or restoring ecclesiastical buildings as of small importance.

I should be the last person to advise that glass which has appeared in any ecclesiastical building should ever be removed, but this is certainly very often done, and a collector who has time to spare, and who is inclined to cycle about the more remote parts of England, could, I am convinced, gather together quite as beautiful a collection as did the man to whom I refer, obtain great joy from his collection, and, eventually, if he thought fit, derive considerable benefit therefrom.

It is important, if possible, to preserve some knowledge of where the glass came from, especially when the medallions represent heads or coats of

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arms, because a great deal of additional information is obtained when the district is known, and there is then always the possibility of being able to identify either the persons or the heraldic achievements.

The collector will soon be able to determine something of the age of the glass which he picks up, and in the fine early pot metal, he will discover some gorgeous colours, and if able to use the lead slips with which the windows are put together, he can, by contrasting colour with colour, have in his own house, some glorious jewelled light effects from pieces of this glass, however small they may be.

He should be advised to reject nothing in the way of old glass that is offered him, however insignificant in size it may be; some of the smaller pieces of the red and blue, such as was used with gorgeous effect in some of the smaller churches in York, are very desirable.

Sometimes it may be possible to find out actually who was the glass maker who was responsible for it; for instance, in York, the work of a man named Peckitt is often to be found, and his colours can almost certainly be identified.

It will be very seldom that the collector will be able to get hold of anything like a complete panel or part of a window, but he will often find pieces that can be put together, and sometimes, even in the same village, various persons may possess bits

of glass which have all come from some discarded lancet in the village church.

Some of the curiosity shops yield panels of Swiss or German stained glass, which have been brought over by collectors and then eventually discarded, and considerable excitement may be obtained in wandering from shop to shop, and finding pieces of stained glass worthy of being added to a collection, and leaded together for the decoration of one's own house.

There are probably not many persons who are able to take the long walks or rides that are necessary in order to obtain glass, and every collector must be prepared for many disappointments.

Many a village will be found to have nothing whatever to offer him, and he will draw blanks on frequent occasions, but it is surprising how much glass has escaped from the parish churches, through careless restoration, and how often small houses have, either fastened into the window, or set up against it, bits of glass of no particular importance to the owner, that never ought to have been removed from the ecclesiastical buildings in the village, and which will be spoils of great delight to the collector of stained glass.

Twice at least in my experience I have seen in ugly vicarage windows, pieces of old glass set in to lights or corners, which generations ago were removed from the parish church, and, in at least

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two cases, had I been a collector, the incumbent was perfectly willing to sell to me these odd pieces of glass, which he deemed ugly and of small importance, if in return I could have supplied him with a piece of plain, good coloured glass in their stead.

I remember, on one occasion, finding a heraldic window, comprising a whole series of coats of arms of one family, missing in two of the more important heraldic achievements, and discovering that, a generation before, the window had been cut to fill a smaller space, and that the two missing coats, which eventually were restored to the window, were in the possession of a man whose grandfather had been churchwarden at the time.

In another case some beautiful pieces of heraldic glass, going back probably to the sixteenth century, were found in the possession of some children who were playing with them, and using them as toys. These were rescued by a collector, who was able by piecing them together, to find out whose arms they represented, and eventually to give himself the pleasure of returning them to the church from whence they had been originally extracted.

The collector may be advised not to turn his back upon any glass on account of its bad condition ; the enamel on glass frequently chips and crumbles away, and the appearance is unsatisfactory, but old stained glass, however poor its

condition, is always delightful in colour, and well worth securing and retaining.

There are two well-known heraldic windows that certainly existed until comparatively recent times that have entirely disappeared. Of one of them there is a drawing by Dugdale in the library of the College of Heralds. It depicted various heraldic coats belonging to the Clifford family. The window is known to have been removed from a private chapel in Appleby Castle, but has entirely disappeared. In another case a sixteenth century window, with some fine figures in it, and some splendid coats of arms, disappeared from a village church in Northamptonshire, and has never since been traced. There would be considerable satisfaction if any collector were to hear of either of these windows, or of any portions of them. Old stained glass, if ever it does find its way into the auction-rooms, fetches year by year an increased and ever-increasing price, and there are several well-known collectors always on the look-out for good examples of it.

CHAPTER VIII

RARE POSTAGE STAMPS

IT is natural that the recent sale of the very rarest stamp in the world, which fetched some 350,000 francs (which must be counted, with commission, as nearly seven thousand pounds), should have attracted considerable attention, and have directed the minds of many persons to that curious and interesting branch of collecting known as philately.

Many years ago, when quite a young man, I was intimately acquainted with an old lady, several of whose relations had gone out to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land in the earliest days of the settlement. She explained to me that she had kept all their letters. Each letter was in its original envelope, and there was a large box full of them. In proof thereof she showed me one envelope on which I recognised two of the very rarest of the large square New South Wales stamps. This, she told me, was by no means the earliest of the letters she had.

I did my best to explain to her that she had a fortune in that box, but she was indignant

at the idea of persons collecting such rubbish, or that she should make money out of a foible so absurd, and by the sale of envelopes which, despite my best endeavours, she said were of no importance.

The next time I alluded to the matter she told me that, to avoid any further trouble, she had burned all the envelopes and retained the letters which, in her opinion, were the only things of interest. So ended her chance of a fortune.

On the other hand, to refer for a moment to the Ferrari sale, it ought to be noted that a stamp issued in British Guiana in 1850 was bought by Monsieur Ferrari twenty-six years ago for £1,450. It sold for £5,250; and another, a very rare stamp, of which Ferrari had the finest copy known, was sold to him in 1909 for £250 and fetched last year £1,112.

Another example, although perhaps not quite so startling, is that of a triangular stamp of the Cape of Good Hope, which was bought for £125 and sold for over £300; but an even more startling case is that in which a pair of Rumanian stamps were bought in 1904 and sold for £150. They then passed into Sir William Avery's collection, from thence they came to Mr. Peckitt, and in 1921 they sold, in the Ferrari sale, for £1,222.

Some of the choicest prices that were realised in 1921 were, for example, an 1856 British Guiana

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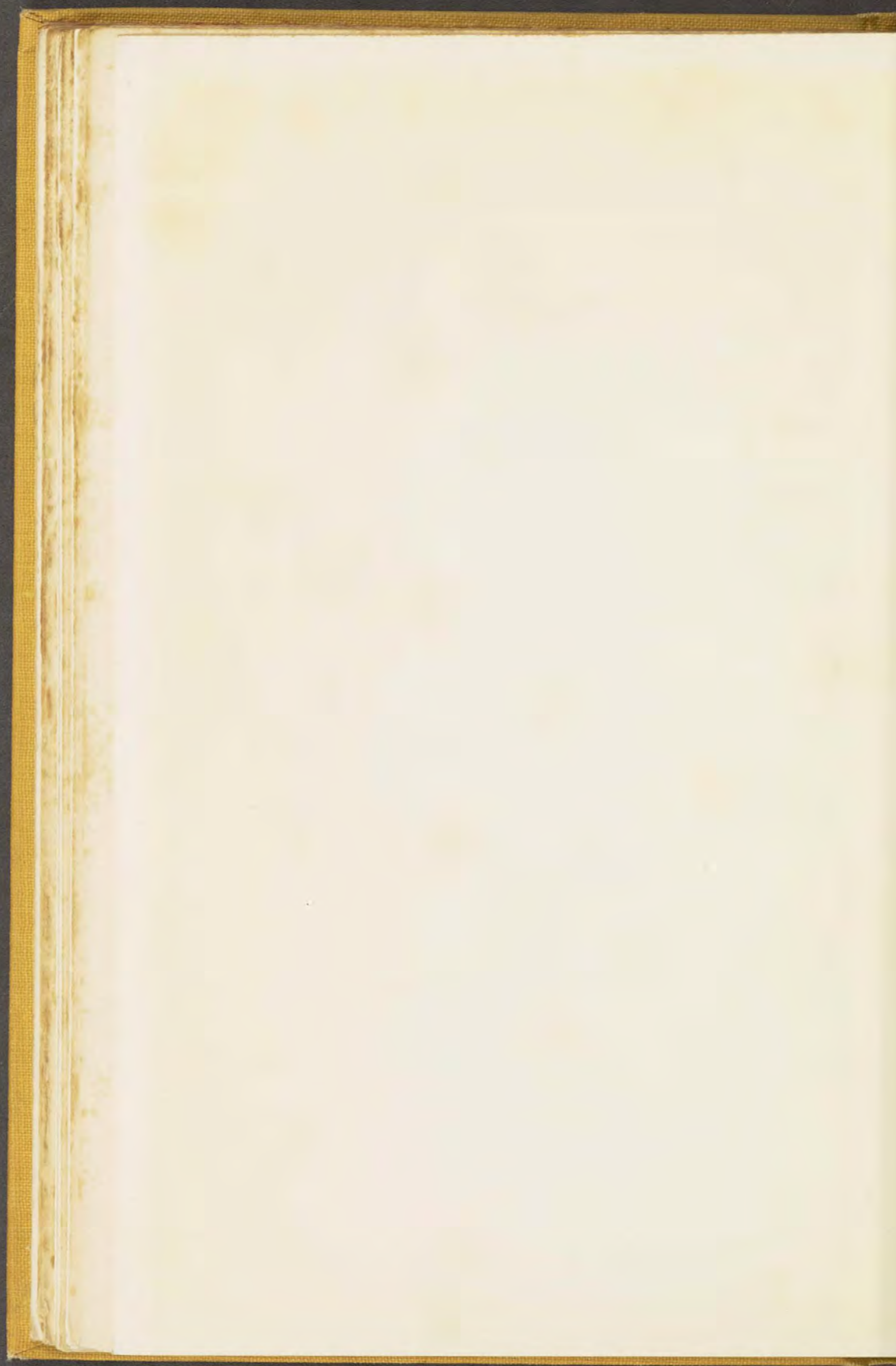
for 4 cents, which sold for £822; an 1851 stamp of the Hawaiian Islands for £2,000; a Post-office Mauritius for £2,177, and another Mauritius stamp for £888, while the finest known copy of the 1851 stamp of Hawaii fetched £3,900, and a superb one of Mauritius fetched £1,500. In the 1922 sale there were still more startling prices. The largest has already been mentioned, but another stamp fetched £2,190, issued by a postmaster in the States; one of something the same kind, £1,250; and a blue United States stamp, £1,626. These figures are, of course, exciting, but it must be borne in mind that they were for the very finest examples possible, in the very finest possible condition, and that they represented the very rarest stamps that are known to stamp collectors.

In some cases I imagine that these prices will be even exceeded, because certain stamps that I saw some few years ago in Mr. Henry Duveen's collection are even finer than the same examples that existed in the Ferrari collection; and even poor stamps from an important collection fetch more money than the same would do if they were placed in an ordinary collection.

There are always chances to be obtained, but I am afraid that few of them are likely to come to collectors in England, and to those that occur abroad there are disappointments equally in store with delights.



CURIOUS AND RARE POSTAGE STAMPS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SAN MARINO.



Mr. Phillips tells us a story of two keen stamp collectors who searched a small town that had done business with Mauritius, and hoped to find amongst old correspondence some good stamps. They did find two quite fine ones. To protect them they put them inside the back of their watch. Next morning the watch was stolen and, on being questioned, it seemed that the thief had thrown away the dirty pieces of paper into the fire, so that, although the watch was regained, the stamp collectors had lost their great find.

The story of one of the British Guiana stamps is very well known because it belonged to an old lady in the Colony who, promising her clergyman anything she could for rebuilding the church, found amongst her old correspondence the two stamps which made her by far the largest donor.

Like the collecting of butterflies, stamp collecting has been sneered at as a schoolboy's hobby, but there are no schoolboys that I have ever heard of who are in a position to pay thousands of pounds for fine stamps, and, moreover, from the point of view of education, few collections can rival that of stamps. I know, when I was collecting years ago, I was taught a great deal about various remote places that I knew little of, and about various persons that I knew even less of, by reason of the portraits that appear on certain stamps, that I learned about currency and its varieties, about changes of dynasty, about

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delicate shades of colour, about the existence of small republics and states of which I knew very little, and about rulers and colonies and postmasters and founders, of whom my ignorance was sublime. Ornithologists and students of natural history can find a pleasure in stamps from the animals and birds finely drawn upon them, the artist can often appreciate their beauty, the historian gains facts from them as to the foundation and the life of youthful colonies, the orientalist finds strange inscriptions to decipher, and that which was at one time thought to be more or less a harmless craze, should now be considered as a serious scientific study, with a great many advantages to recommend it.

Those of my readers who live in remote parts of the world may still have the opportunity of picking up quite choice treasures. Others who are wise enough to preserve the ephemeral productions, the stamps of new States and the stamps issued by various provincial authorities, in such countries as Russia, may yet live to reap a harvest of financial importance as well as considerable delight in forming a collection that has so many claims for recognition at the present day.

They will also live in exceedingly good company, because the King is an enthusiastic collector and has a superb series of albums, many of which he has lent from time to time to meetings of philatelists.

The Prince of Wales follows his father's example and is, no doubt, collecting stamps in his world tours, while one of his rivals is the newly-established King of Egypt.

The two finest collections that I ever saw belong to Americans ; one was at one time in the possession of the Earl of Crawford, who was President of the Philatelic Society, and whose albums were of wonderful interest ; the other was the collection already referred to belonging to Mr. Henry Duveen.

There is a certain romance belonging to the Ferrari collection because it was bequeathed to the Berlin Museum, but it happened to be in France at the moment and was immediately placed under sequestration by the French Republic. An offer was at once made of fifteen million francs for the entire collection, but the first two portions fetched nearly six millions, and to all that has to be added the Government tax of $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. There is still a large portion of the collection to come into the market, and it is stated that there will be two or three more batches of it to be sold before it is exhausted.

The man who first gave me the idea of collecting was Mr. F. A. Philbrick, who was for some years the leader of British collectors and, as a man of substantial means, was able to bring together quite a good series. Philately is now so complete a science that it is useless for any person, unless

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possessed of very substantial means, to go in for it as a whole, but there are separate sections that are well worth studying, and persons of quite small means can appreciate the delight of making a collection, say, of Spanish stamps (a very strange series), of Australians, of Colonials, or of the various kinds of British stamps.

CHAPTER IX

MEZZOTINTS

THERE are few things more attractive to the collector than mezzotints. In fact, I am disposed to think that, amongst all the art productions which may be termed illustrations, there is nothing so beautiful in itself as a really fine impression of a good English mezzotint.

The rich, delicate, velvety background is of course its main feature, and to be in good condition this velvet must have a bloom upon it, almost like the bloom upon a piece of fruit.

Moreover, the mezzotint must have its margin, and this should, if possible, be complete and deckle-edged; but the main thing is that the brilliant black bloom of the mezzotint be perfect.

There never was a finer selection of these treasures than that which I saw in the Emperor of Russia's own private cabinet. It comprised examples of the finest of the English eighteenth century mezzotints as well as of those that preceded that period.

With every print was preserved the original bluish-grey tissue with which it had been sent to Russia, and on which, in delicate outline, was

printed the set-off of the mezzotint, just so much of the original bloom as had necessarily fallen upon the first piece of tissue paper laid upon it.

There had been a man appointed in the Russian Court, ever since the time of the Empress, to look after the collection, to air the various pieces day by day, and to replace each of them with the original tissue in its box.

Moreover—and this was the outstanding feature in the whole collection—there were preserved with the mezzotints the bills made out to the Empress Catherine, in which the great dealers of the day charged her sums from ten shillings up to two or three pounds for proof impressions that, till the Bolsheviks destroyed them, were worth perhaps five hundred or a thousand pounds apiece.

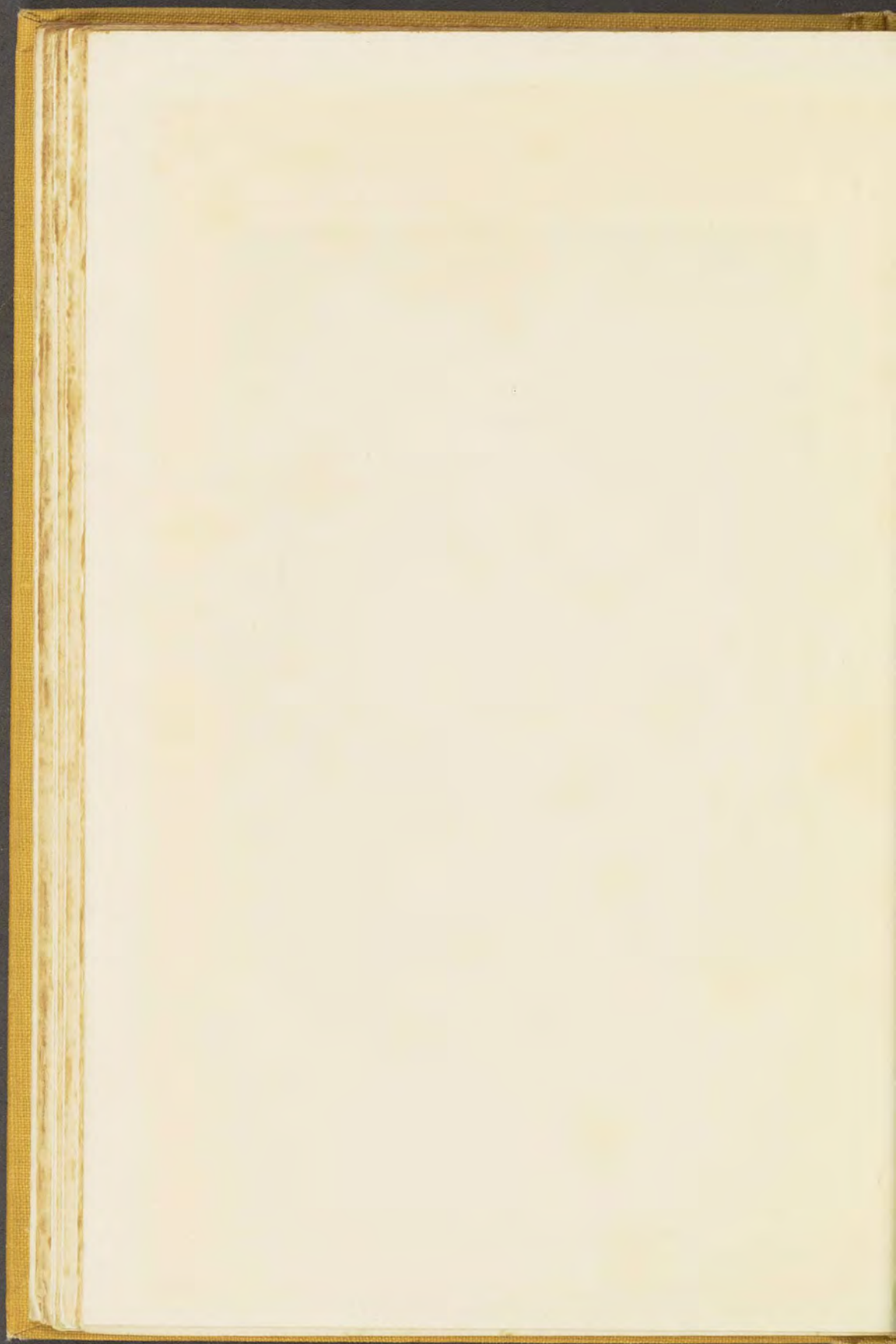
A mezzotint is not like an ordinary engraving. The plate on which it is engraved is first of all roughened, instead of being smoothly polished as is done with other kinds of engravings.

It has lines drawn upon it backwards and forwards and a cradle or rocker passed over it, which tears up the copper in various directions, and then, if a print was taken of the plate before the artist began his work the result would simply be a beautiful, intense black, perfectly plain, rich and soft.

The artist then sets to work to what is called "scrape"—the technical word for making the mezzotint—scraping away the burr, burnishing the



HENRIETTA, COUNTESS OF WARWICK.
Mezzotint from Lord Cheylesmore's Collection, after Romney.
Scraped by J. R. Smith.



high lights, scraping a little less for lights that are not quite so high, and leaving the parts of the plate where the deep shadows occur almost untouched.

The art was not an English one in its beginning, the first example being done by Ludwig van Siegen, a soldier in the service of the Landgrave of Cassel, William VI. It has been said that he discovered the method when he was cleaning the steel of his gun, but there is not much evidence for the truth of the story. Suffice it that the earliest mezzotint of which we know anything is the portrait of the Prince's mother, who was reigning as Regent, and a letter written in August, 1642, proves the case.

Van Siegen taught Prince Rupert. Why, we do not know, but in some way or other Prince Rupert persuaded van Siegen to give him the knowledge he so desired, and Prince Rupert produced in 1658 his masterpiece of mezzotint, "The Great Executioner."

The first English mezzotint portrait was Sherwin's portrait of Charles II, dated 1669. Whether Rupert taught Sherwin how to do it, or whether Evelyn's book, which describes it and which reproduces one of Prince Rupert's plates, came into the hands of Sherwin, we are not quite certain, but what we do know is, that Sherwin acknowledged Prince Rupert as his teacher and dedicated the print to him.

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He was followed by a man named Place, and a little later by a far greater man, Abraham Blooteling, whose portrait of the Duke of Monmouth is perhaps the best he ever did and is as splendid an example of mezzotint as anyone can want to see. It was a very large picture, 25 inches by 20 inches, and the brilliance of the hair in the wig, its soft lustre and the quality of the lace make it a masterpiece. There is so little of Blooteling's own drawing in existence that I am disposed to claim for my own signed example that it is almost the only piece in England. It simply shows him as a clever draughtsman, the mezzotint reveals him as a superb artist.

Conspicuous amongst the great mezzotinters, there stands out that wonderful man James MacArdell, whose illustrations of Sir Joshua Reynolds's pictures are unequalled in merit. Others are Watts, Dixon, Pether, Purcell, Marchi, and Dawe, amongst the later men; and Faber, White, Williams and Beckett amongst the earlier; but all collectors of mezzotints know in whose work they place their particular regard, and whose prints they specially covet.

There have occasionally been wonderful bargains found in mezzotints. I believe that one of the finest examples in the Cheylesmore collection in the British Museum was discovered framed in a small country inn in Devonshire, and very often quite striking impressions fall

into the hands of collectors away in distant villages.

Generally, however, these have had their margins cut, and so lost a good deal of their value, but sometimes this is not the case. Occasionally a picture has drifted from a big house into a smaller one, and still preserves its margin untouched, but if the collector is unable to get museum examples (and undoubtedly it is a very difficult thing to obtain such first-rate impressions), he can often find in small shops really beautiful mezzotints, marvellous in charm and glorious in effect.

Mezzotint gives a method of illustrating draperies which is almost unequalled, the very surface and appearance of velvet, as in the "Master Lambton," by Lawrence, or in the "Calmady Children," is wonderfully expressed; the long, sweeping drapery of Sir Joshua Reynolds's figures, silk or satin, can be set forth by no process with such perfection and beauty. Every line and gleam in the satin of Reynolds's, Romney's and Hudson's figures, comes out with amazing effect.

In another branch of the same subject, one finds groups of flowers and insects, treated with equal dexterity. Fortunately, the art is not extinct, as there are still important mezzotinters living, and their number does not grow less, while their work is as rich as that of their predecessors. There is no doubt that the costume and the

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coiffure of the eighteenth century lent itself to the beauty of engraving, and that in the early mezzotints the magnificence and dignity of the great wigs that were worn produced a wonderful effect. The portrait by Blooteling, after Lely, of "The Duke of Monmouth," would lose a good deal of its dignity if the Duke had been represented without his full-bottomed gleaming curly wig.

There are good mezzotinters in France, and some of their productions are even more precious than English ones, but for charm and sheer beauty there is hardly anything that can be compared with an English mezzotint, and it has been generally recognised that in MacArdell, Valentine, Green and Dickenson, amongst the late men, and in White and Blooteling amongst the earlier ones, we have men whose work stands absolutely apart, and has never been surpassed.

To come right down to the present day, there was Lucas, and there is Sir Frank Short, and there are Hurst and Robinson, all of whose works are worth collecting, with a view to the times that are coming after, but there are few collectors who have the enterprise to buy and collect modern mezzotints on their own judgment, and it is to the publications of Sayer, Bowles and Humphrey, of the eighteenth century, that the collector mainly goes.

In one of the bills in the Empress Catherine's collection, there was a note in Sayers' hand-

writing, saying that but six impressions of a particular portrait had been printed, that they all varied slightly, and that therefore he had taken the liberty of sending to the Empress all six of them, and had charged three guineas apiece. Any one of these precious proofs, if it has escaped the hands of the Bolsheviks, would easily to-day fetch a thousand pounds, and very probably more.

CHAPTER X

POST-CARDS

IT is a mere platitude to say that the world has suffered very much from the results of war, and the only reason that I mention such an obvious fact is that I may add that so far as I know, the only real advantage that the world has ever derived from war was the introduction of the post-card. Post-cards first appeared in connection with the Franco-German War in 1870, and yet this statement requires a little modification, because Austria produced the first post-cards that were ever seen, and in 1869, a few months before war broke out. The ideas, however, originated with the same person, the German statesman, Heinrich von Stephan (1831-1897), who, at a postal conference in 1865, threw out the suggestion of the issue of a post-card, and expressly said that, from a military point of view, it would be an exceedingly valuable advantage. The idea was carefully considered, and on the 26th January, 1869, the Austrian Postmaster-General issued a million post-cards, and a copy of one of them lies before me. It bore upon it all kinds of inscriptions as to its use, especially a statement

that the post office undertook no responsibility for the contents of the communication, and it went on to add as to what kind of communication should be put on the card, where the communication should be written, and so on.

The Austrian post-cards were not a general success, but in the following year, the idea leapt into prominence, because Stephan started his field post-card for the use of the soldiers, and by means of the field post, maintained uninterrupted communication with the army in the field—using, in the first few months of the war, over two and a half million post-cards, and finding them most acceptable to the soldiers. These field post-cards were not beautiful objects, by any means. They were printed in black and white, they had all kinds of instructions upon them, and separate places for the insertion of details concerning the military rank of the writer, and they were accompanied by two kinds of envelopes, also introduced by Stephan for the use of longer communications. Some of these could be sent open, and so, to a certain extent, resembled post-cards. Stephan was very enthusiastic over the success of his post-card, and sent out circulars to all the other post offices concerning them, and, in 1870, Great Britain followed suit, introducing the small post-card of lilac on buff, which commenced our series.

I have often wondered why there are not more

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people who collect post-cards. There is one great advantage that the post-card possesses over the postage stamp, in the fact that it is rarely, if ever, forged. I believe there are only two forged post-cards, or perhaps three, that are known to collectors, those for Heligoland, Japan, and possibly Paraguay. Post-cards are exceedingly artistic and charming to look at; they are far less costly to obtain than are postage stamps; they offer an interesting hunting ground for persons who take delight in minor varieties, such as errors, and varieties of frame, lettering or design; they are quite easy to keep, whether in albums or in bundles, and are far less likely to be lost than are small postage stamps, while an album of post-cards is quite an ornamental book, full of delight to a collector, and in many ways quite as interesting as an album of postage stamps. For the history of the earliest post-cards, the military cards, and the changes that took place in them, make of itself the study a very fascinating one.

Post-cards came in with a rush, and yet there were very few countries in 1870 that made anything like an important use of them. Austria, Hungary, Wurtemberg, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Baden and Switzerland, were the earliest countries to issue cards. They were followed by several others in 1871, and prominent amongst those is the exceedingly pretty blue post-card

which Canada produced in that year, and which is a fine piece of bank note engraving executed in Montreal.

Heligoland, Belgium, Denmark, Chili and Finland followed suit. Russia did not issue any cards until 1872, and then came out with two or three varieties; the beautiful card issued by Ceylon belongs to that year, and the inscriptions in Tamil form a charming piece of decoration round these very pretty cards. Sweden issued cards in that year, followed in the next year by the United States, France, Luxemburg, Rumania, Servia, Shanghai, and the charming green post-card of Newfoundland, another very artistic piece of work, in which the Prince of Wales was represented in Scottish costume, and this production was executed in bank note fashion by the American Bank Note Company in New York.

From that time onwards the movement spread, and during the early seventies many countries, such as Japan, Norway, etc., and various English colonies, followed suit, but others lingered behind, and it was not till the eighties that Spain had any post-cards, and about the same time Argentina, Bulgaria, Egypt, Persia, Guatemala and Turkey began to issue cards of their own. Stephan's idea spread slowly and steadily, until eventually, when we come into the eighties, we find practically every country in the world of any importance issuing and using post-cards.

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Reply post-cards came out in Great Britain in October, 1893, but several countries had issued them before that time, and very charming some of the double issues were, especially those for Finland, Austria, Hungary, Bavaria and the German Federations. The Eastern post-cards were longer and narrower than those used in Europe, and some of them, especially the earliest Japanese that were sent out, were on paper rather than card, in some instances on a kind of native rice paper, but they were found inconvenient, and cardboard quickly took their place.

Another interesting feature of post-cards is the fact that there are a considerable number of what are called commemorative post-cards, officially issued in order to commemorate certain events; for instance, there was one issued by the little republic of San Marino in 1894 to commemorate the anniversary of its independence; there was one in 1888 in New South Wales, to mark the fiftieth year of the issue of postage stamps in the colony; France issued two in 1893, one commemorating the centenary of Dunkirk, the other the visit of the Emperor of Russia to Toulon; Italy issued one in 1894, in respect to an international exhibition; in 1895, in connection with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the liberation of Rome; and in 1896 as a souvenir of the marriage of the Prince of Naples. Then such events as the

assassination of King Humbert, the funeral of President Faure, the Kaiser's visit to Constantinople, the coronation of Alfonso XIII of Spain, the deaths of Verdi, President McKinley and Zola, have been commemorated by post-cards, and celebrations in connection with Benvenuto Cellini, Victor Hugo, the visit of the Shah to Ostend, and the eightieth birthday of Bismarck, have all been made the subject of special post-cards, which are of interest to collectors.

Again, there is also another series, that known as official pictorial post-cards, bearing the usual printed or impressed stamps, and yet having illustrations upon them of certain important scenes, which the particular Government of the day desired should be represented. There is a fine series of Greek cards, with views of the country upon them, and other series of the same kind were issued in Switzerland, Belgium, France, and Italy. There was an important series issued in the Transvaal to illustrate mining, and Canada brought out a very interesting and artistic series of views on some of her official cards; Queensland, Cape Colony, New South Wales, and New Zealand did the same. These are not ordinary picture post-cards, but actual official cards, with Government stamps upon them, and are very well worth collecting.

Furthermore, a collector may be interested in some of the curiosities of post-cards, as, for

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example, the now rare card issued in Great Britain in 1872, with an impressed stamp upon it, and the curious, but not rare, foreign post-card of our own country, with a penny farthing stamp upon it, being half the foreign postage of the time, which was 2½d.

A rather rare thing very much resembles the impressed card just referred to, and is called a certificate of posting; it came out in 1877, and was issued at the importunate request of certain faddists, amongst whom the chief was a Mr. Clifford-Eskell, in order that people might have certificates that they had actually posted letters, newspapers or book packets. They were first issued on the 14th of November, 1877, in Liverpool, Birmingham and Bath, and then extended to other places, but disappeared in November, 1878, and had been hardly taken up at all by the public. Only 4,565 were sold at Liverpool, 1,119 at Birmingham, and but 49 in Bath, and the majority of the 15,000 that were issued were called in again and destroyed. The only real sale for these was on the part of some dealers, who felt sure that the issue was going to be a very short one and who bought up the certificates of postage in order to be quite sure that they could supply them to their customers.

Collectors of post-cards are often eager to obtain the card that was issued in commemoration of the Jubilee of Postage, at the Guildhall in

London, and the envelope with its card enclosed, which was issued at the South Kensington Museum on the 2nd of July in the same year, 1890. There were only ten thousand of the Guildhall ones done, and very few of them were posted actually in the Hall and so acquired the diamond-shaped cancel mark which was made for the purpose. Of the South Kensington cards many were bought in an unused condition, but it is not often that they are to be found with the special "V.R." dated circular cancel stamp which was used at the Exhibition.

Another treasure that British collectors are eager to get consists of the two varieties of the first United Kingdom aerial post—the halfpenny card in a blackish-green cover, and the penny envelope with its notepaper enclosed, all printed in red. These were intended for conveyance by aeroplane from London to Windsor.

There are no great treasures, running into hundreds or thousands of pounds, to be obtained by the post-card collector, but there are many opportunities for turning over purchases at considerably enhanced values, and cards for which he gave a few pence are frequently sold for as many shillings; and there are some special varieties which, amongst collectors who understand them, run into very much higher prices. The collector of post-cards is pretty sure to include letter-cards in his collection. These did not come

out in Great Britain until February 12th, 1892, but they had been used in many countries on the Continent before then and, curiously enough, have always had a greater attraction to foreign users than they have to Englishmen. It is quite certain that the use of letter-cards in Great Britain has been very much less in proportion than it is on the Continent.

German history tells us that the Counts of Thurn and Taxis, who had been hereditary postmasters for Germany, and who also, through a branch of the same family, carried on a similar arrangement in Spain, were exceedingly bitter against Stephan for the introduction of the post-card. They had already seen a considerable loss from the breaking down of their old monopoly, and they saw, by his intention to extend the use of postage, their emoluments were going to pass away altogether. They had farmed the postal service of Central Germany for some three hundred years, and then, in 1864, Stephan introduced the Government arrangement in Schleswig and Holstein, and in 1866, over all the newly annexed provinces, and he quite quickly began to see the enormous advantages of simple postage ; so that to him we owe, not only the introduction of the card, but various other simplifications of postage law which were started in Germany, and gradually spread to other parts of Europe. We may decry the fact that our post-card was first made in

Germany, but we must nevertheless gladly give to Stephan the credit of having introduced an advantage which it is almost impossible to over-value, and of having started a series of cards to which collectors would do well to give greater attention and which are thoroughly worthy of being made the subject of an interesting collection.

CHAPTER XI

THE RAREST FAIENCE IN THE WORLD

THERE is one kind of pottery which is rarer than anything else of its kind, and moreover, it has never been copied with anything like accuracy. There are, I believe, no real forgeries of it ; the existence of every piece is carefully chronicled, and there is huge competition for any of these pieces whenever they happen to come into the auction room. It is, perhaps, tantalising to write about it, because the chances of any collectors obtaining a piece of this ware are so remote, and yet the story of it is so interesting.

When it was first discovered it was called Henri II ware, because it had upon it the monogram and the emblems of Henri II and also those of Francis I of France, and for a while that was the only clue people had concerning it. Then, all at once, a Monsieur Fillon came to the conclusion that he had solved the mystery. He said that, in about 1529, for a certain Countess Hélène de Hangest, some wonderful pieces of pottery had been made by a potter named Cherpentier, under the express instructions of her librarian and

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secretary, Jean Bernard, and he pointed out that this extraordinary ware is decorated by marks closely resembling those on book bindings, and that the ciphers and the arms and the monograms all resemble those made by book-binding stamps. He proved that the librarian had made designs for the lady in whose employment he was, for binding and for frontispieces, and it was accepted as almost conclusive evidence that this ware was made at the Castle of Thouars and that it should be called Oiron instead of Henri II, while a further proof existed in the fact that the letter "G," signifying Gouffier—the husband of Hélène de Hangest—came several times upon the ware, and that "H," the initial of her own name, also appeared frequently, while the arms and initials of various families connected with her particular district occurred also on this ware. Therefore, for a long time, it bore the name of Oiron ware, and the evidence that Monsieur Fillon brought forward seemed to be absolutely conclusive. Then another critic took up the investigation, and two pamphlets were issued by a Monsieur Bonnaffé, in which he declared that he had proved that the ware was made at quite another place, called Saint Porchaire, and that, although specimens had been preserved with great care at the Château of Thouars by Monsieur Claude Gouffier, for whom the same librarian had acted, yet it was not made at that château but in the little village of Saint

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Porchaire, and he pointed out that almost all the pieces had been found in the Poitou district, that there was a ceramic establishment at Saint Porchaire, that in 1552 a certain Monsieur Charles Estienne had spoken of the beauty of the Porchaire ware, and that in 1566 a local poet had sung its glories in his poems.

There, for the present, the matter has to rest, and connoisseurs use all three names—Henri II, Oiron, and Saint Porchaire—when they speak of this exceedingly beautiful ware, which is sometimes called a ware of Touraine and sometimes a ware of Poitou, and no one has been able to prove really where it was made.

It is very remarkable in its appearance: pale creamy colour, marked with a black and white or red decoration, in the form of a series of fine stamps of arabesque detail, and it would appear that the space that the tools cut in the pottery were filled in with another coloured paste, either red or green or black, and then the whole thing was glazed and tooled down to a uniform smoothness, almost, in parts, as if it had been turned in a lathe, and on to this surface figures and other decorations were attached, which were also made in the same creamy clay, and also had, inlaid upon them, other coloured clays, generally green or blue, and then they, in their turn, were smoothed down, so that the whole ware is covered with

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what appears to be a kind of inlaid effect of colour upon a creamy ground.

Some of the pieces, notably the wonderful candlestick in the South Kensington Museum, have seated figures and mask faces, with floral decorations and cherubs' heads, all wrought with extreme dexterity and all decorated in this intricate system of fine design, interlacing scrolls and devices, forming an exquisite incrustation, and all belonging to the period from 1520 up to 1550, generally known as the Renaissance decoration.

As soon as any of this ware was discovered it was admired and appreciated, but perhaps it was not until the sale of the Fountaine collection at Narford Hall, on June 16th, 1884, that the Saint Porchaire ware attracted this special attention in England. Underneath a bed in one of the less important rooms in the house was found a rush basket, very carefully fastened up, and inside, packed away with the greatest possible precaution, were discovered three fine pieces of this ware—a candlestick, a salt-cellar, and a biberon.

The candlestick had the arms of France and the Montmorency arms on it, and fetched three thousand five hundred guineas; the salt-cellar fetched fifteen hundred guineas; and the biberon a thousand guineas, and all three pieces were illustrated in the catalogue.

In July, 1892, another wonderful piece came

up for sale in the Magniac collection—a splendid ewer which had been in the possession of Monsieur Odier, a goldsmith and well-known collector in Paris, and which Mr. Magniac had purchased in 1842. It was only fourteen and a half inches high, and it fetched three thousand eight hundred guineas, passing into the possession of one of the members of the Rothschild family.

The Rothschilds have always taken a very keen interest in this particular ware and have regarded it as specially suited for their collections, and whenever pieces have come up for sale they have been eager competitors for it. At one time Sir Anthony de Rothschild had seven pieces, Baron Lionel two pieces, Baron Alphonse three, Baron Gustave two, and Baron James one, and, in all probability, all the pieces that have ever been bought by the Rothschilds are still in the possession of some member or other of that family.

One small piece came to the South Kensington Museum in the Salting Collection. It had originally belonged to the Duke of Hamilton, and was sold at the Hamilton Sale, in 1882, for £1,218. It then passed to the Spitzer Collection, and I well remember Mr. George Salting's excitement when he came home from Paris and was able to tell me that he had secured this little tazza for £1,500, and how he had been opposed by one member of the Rothschild family who had bid against him

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step by step for it. It was not one of the great pieces, nor one of the most beautiful, but it is an object of considerable charm, and bears upon it the interlaced crescents of Diane de Poitiers. It is, of course, creamy ground, with the exquisite and delicate designs upon it that are embossed with the book-binding stamps and filled in with coloured clays, and just slightly enriched with touches of other colour, and it occupies an important place in the middle of the Salting earthenware case in the Museum and is numbered 1,233.

In 1892 a salt-cellar that had been in Madame D'Yvon's collection came up for sale, quite a small piece, and that was at once secured by one of the Rothschilds at a price rather over a thousand pounds. When, in 1891, Mr. Chaffers tried to make up a list of all the pieces of this precious ware that were known to him he had to confess that the greater number of pieces were in France, but that there were then twenty-six pieces in England, of which six were in the South Kensington Museum. Since then the number has, I am afraid, been reduced because the Magniac vase, one of the pieces that belonged to the Duke of Hamilton, the pieces that belonged to Mr. George Field, the example from the Malcolm collection, and the example from the M. T. Smith collection, have all been sold and are believed, every one of them, to be in French collections.

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There is no other ware in existence of which all the pieces have been so carefully catalogued as this. It is now a great many years since a piece has come into the market; probably the last occasion was in 1893, and the prices now would be considerably higher than they were even at that time. At one moment there existed five pieces in Russia, all in the Imperial collection, but when I was last in that country I only saw two, in the Hermitage Gallery. One more was declared to be at one of the Emperor's houses, but I did not see it at either of the three palaces I visited. As, however, the Emperor had a great many palaces, I think it is quite possible that it still exists. Of the fourth and fifth pieces I could hear nothing, and I wonder now very much as to what has become of the two pieces that I did actually see.

The opportunity here for a skilful collector is an unrivalled one. If he could but find the wonderful biberon which at one time belonged to Prince Galitzin, and which certainly was supposed to have gone to the Emperor of Russia, there is a fortune waiting for him, because it was one of the finest pieces of the whole series, exquisite in colour, rivalling the wonderful candlestick at South Kensington in its grace of composition and dignity of design—a piece for which there will be a very great competition, if it ever again should come into the market.

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There is a cup with a cover in the Cluny Museum, there are five wonderful pieces in the Louvre, a large jug, that was evidently intended for some ecclesiastical purpose, because it is decorated with a crucifix and with religious emblems ; a splendid candlestick ; four fine salt-cellars, and two tazze.

There is one tazza at Sèvres in the museum, and there is an odd cover of a cup. Another cover belongs to the D'Uzes family, and yet another cover was obtained in the South of France and passed into the collection of Monsieur Delessert, so that there is every opportunity for a skilful collector to try to find the cups to which these three covers belong, and it is quite a possible thing that in some small town in Poitiers there may be lurking yet these missing cups or some other pieces of this extraordinarily beautiful ware.

Once it has been seen it will never be confused with anything else. It is entirely different to any other ware that has ever been made. Its decoration is so pure and so delightful, its charm is so incomparable, and when one realises that not more than about sixty-five pieces are known to exist and that some of these are imperfect, there is plenty of room for the zest of a collector. Moreover, every piece differs, there are no two pieces in the least alike, and pieces have been found from time to time in all sorts of curious places. One of the most remarkable pieces, a ewer, was discovered as recently as 1887 at

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Bourges, in the house of a Monsieur Rhodier, who had inherited it from his ancestors and had always regarded it as a very special piece, but had no idea of its supreme value until Monsieur Stein purchased it for three thousand pounds and added it with great glee to his collection.

We are fortunate in England to possess such fine pieces as the two salt-cellars, the salver, the two tazze (one with a cover and one without), and the candlestick in the South Kensington Museum, and to have been able to have added to the national wealth the little piece which Mr. Salting bequeathed in later years. There are not many chances for the collector, but they are worth bearing in mind, for the ware is so beautiful and so rare that every effort to obtain a piece of it is well merited. Failure may probably be the result, but at the same time there is always the possibility of success.

CHAPTER XII

BAXTER PRINTS

BAXTER prints are objects of considerable beauty and charm. They represent a particular historic epoch, and, moreover, are steadily increasing in value, but their collection is a somewhat sore subject with me because I have a clear recollection of how many of them have been destroyed in my own childhood and, I am afraid, by myself.

In my nursery at home we had the various numbers of "The Child's Companion," "The Missionary Memorial," "The Missionary Labours of Dr. Robert Moffat"; several of those interesting books by Robert Mudie, such as the ones on the "Feathered Tribes," "The Air," "The Sea" and "The Natural History of Birds"; "Evenings at Home," by Anna Barbould; Campbell's book on the death of the Rev. John Williams; Williams's own narrative of his missionary enterprise, and more than one example of the Religious Tract Society's "Scripture Pocket-Books." All of these contained illustrations by Baxter, and all of these books were carelessly destroyed by a group of children, of whom I was one. Yet, after all, one

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has to thank the destructive ingenuity of children for the fact that the Baxter prints have become so rare and are so well worth collecting.

A little later on in my life I remember seeing a copy of Baxter's Pictorial Key to the '51 Exhibition and Baxter's "Gems of the Great Exhibition," the latter book containing several of his illustrations, the former a list of his prints, and these again were in process of destruction by children. The prints in colour were very attractive, and they often adorned books that possessed only a certain ephemeral interest, with the result that the books were destroyed, the illustrations taken out of them, and many of them, in consequence, have become very scarce.

I have also a distinct recollection of a three-fold screen, composed of canvas, on to which all kinds of illustrations were pasted, and in an old childish scrap-book now before me I find traces of certain of the coloured pictures having been taken out, and I believe they were fastened on to this screen and covered over with a kind of varnish to keep them clean. The screen has of course vanished long ago, and with it the Baxter illustrations, including, I am quite sure, an example of his masterpiece—the Coronation of Queen Victoria, which is now worth a considerable sum, say, perhaps, nearly forty pounds.

Another very rare Baxter print represented the arrival of the Queen to open her first Parliament,

and that is just as precious as the Coronation one and as beautiful; the launching of the wooden ship of war, *Trafalgar*, is another very rare one; but perhaps the rarest of all is one about which it is even doubtful whether it exists—"The *Reliance* in full sail off Hong-Kong." This is particularly mentioned in a newspaper of 1843 as in existence, but none of the collectors up to the present time, as far as I know, have been able to find it; and if they do succeed in obtaining it, probably all the Baxter prices will go by the board in the demand to obtain this particular thing.

Baxter is dismissed with a word or two in the "Dictionary of National Biography," far more attention being paid to his father; but he was a great man, the inventor of the oil process of making colour prints and he took infinite pains in their preparation, and produced, not only the first successful prints in colour that possessed any distinctive beauty, but also, in his own particular way, the very best that were ever done.

Baxter prints are marvellous, because his presses were not like the modern ones, which all work with "undeviating exactness," but they were hand presses and every one of his blocks demanded a separate printing, and some of them as many as ten, fifteen, or even twenty printings, and yet the register is extraordinarily exact and the prints will bear the closest examination with a strong glass and will not suffer under it.

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How exactly Baxter executed his prints no one is able to say. We know the working up to a certain point, we appreciate the exquisite quality of the paper, we understand the brilliancy of the colours, but there were many secrets in his process which have never been revealed, and which were not revealed even to those persons who worked after his time, under his licence, such as Bradshaw, Kronheim, Le Blond and Myers, so that their results, fine and delightful as they are, are not as perfect as Baxter's. Some of Le Blond's, however, are well worth collecting, and are excellent examples of fine colour printing.

In 1888 the Baxter plates and blocks passed from Le Blond's hands (he having obtained them from Baxter) into the hands of a Mr. Mockler, and he it was who, in 1893, compiled the first list of Baxter prints and started the Baxter Society. It issued a journal, but it only ran for three numbers and then the society became extinct. Mr. Mockler's collection was sold by auction in 1896, and in that year Mr. Bullock issued his catalogue of Baxter prints, and since that time there have been several catalogues and articles on these wonderful pieces of colour printing. The contents of all of them were, however, summed up by Mr. Courtney Lewis when he issued his manual on Baxter in 1908 and gave a very careful catalogue and description of all the prints of the existence of which he was aware.

This is now the standard book on the subject, and to it all collectors must be referred, because Mr. Lewis not only describes the prints, but speaks about their extraordinary variety, and in many instances tells of the value of them up to his time. Since his day, however, the prices have been considerably augmented, and really fine examples of Baxter prints are worth at least thrice, and perhaps even four times, what they were in 1908. The latest edition is of 1919.

Collectors have to be very careful about varieties. Take, for example, one of the gems of the 1851 Exhibition, the statue of the young girl kneeling and veiled, called "The Veiled Vestal." It is to be found on a green pedestal, on a red pedestal with a blue background, and with a dark red background; and all these varieties have different values, that with the green pedestal being by far the rarest. The portraits of Queen Victoria, of which there were several, are amongst the most notable, the one called "The Large Queen," a block 15½ inches by 11½ inches, published about 1859 (a print made by at least twelve printings), is worth from ten to twenty pounds, according to condition; and the one called "The Small Queen," 4½ inches by 3 inches, published about 1850, about half that price; but if on a Baxter mount, very considerably more. There is also a demand for the portraits of Prince Albert, Jenny Lind, Sir Robert Peel, Lord Nelson, the Duke of

Wellington, Napoleon III, the Empress Josephine, and the Reverend John Wesley, but the scarcest of all are portraits of Charles Chubb, the well-known lock manufacturer, and Maria, his wife. It is said that there were not more than about ten or fifteen pairs of these prints finished. Baxter produced them about 1843 or 1844 on the recommendation of Dr. Hoole, of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, who married one of Mr. Chubb's daughters, for the special benefit of the members of the Chubb family, and they hardly ever have been known to come into the market, although collectors are always on the look out for them. A pair last year fetched £700.

Another of the very rare ones is called "The Abolition of Slavery," announced to be published in 1840. It was described in the advertisement and a good many subscriptions were received for it, and as it was to contain 130 portraits of friends of the Abolition Movement, there was a great demand for it. Yet, curiously enough, not one collector can boast of possessing a copy of it.

It may be taken for granted that there are practically no forgeries of these prints. Baxter prints in colour are from Baxter plates or blocks, either made by Baxter himself or his son, or by Brooks or Le Blond, but as to the details that distinguish these various makes the collectors must be referred to the book already mentioned. The prints are much more important if they are

on Baxter's own mounts, and if they are signed and dated. The earliest of all is the one called "Butterflies," which came out in 1829—a book illustration, and now a very rare thing, worth £80 in fine condition. It was probably an experiment, because for five years there was no other example, and then came three representing birds—dippers, grebes, and the eagle and vulture. These also are rare, and as the beginning of a very long series, extending to nearly four hundred prints, they are of particular interest.

Of course, not all Baxter prints are in colours; the best are so, but there are what are called Baxterotypes, which were not in colour (although two of these were by other printers produced actually in colour), and there are some prints in red, somewhat approaching a Bartolozzi red, but not quite the same tone; but what collectors want are the coloured ones, and they should be strongly recommended not to expose them to the light, because they fade, the flesh tints being especially liable to disappear. They should be mounted on sheets of paper, and kept with tissue paper between them so that the fine prints should not be rubbed.

The address on the mounts, by the way, is always Northampton Square. There was a great demand for the various country scenes, and, in consequence, these are rare, and another series that collectors are anxious to get hold of was

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issued at the time of the Crimean War, and two interesting ones are "News from Home" and "News from Australia," issued at the time of the gold digging excitement.

One of the most beautiful is called "The Small Bride," done from a painting by Miss Corbeaux. Mr. Mockler used to say that only a hundred of it were in existence, but a much later writer spoke of about two hundred and fifty. It was originally issued in a gold and velvet frame, and on a mount, and is a marvellous piece of execution. In its original issue, it is very rare indeed; as a pocket book illustration, it is almost as rare.

There are two others, called the First Impression, which are precious pocket book plates. Some people say that the second plate was not by Baxter at all, and about this there is some controversy.

Two strips, representing Fairies, printed for the tops of needle boxes, are marvellously dexterous, and amongst them appear quite recognisable portraits of the well-known dancers Taglioni and Grisi. Two or three other sets for needle boxes are well worth obtaining, The Regal, The Floral, The Tarantella, and the Greek Dance, and ten oval portraits of Mutiny heroes with Queen Victoria is one of the precious things which collectors are eager to get.

Of the Rev. John Williams, the missionary

murdered in the South Seas, there are a number of portraits, at least nine. They are all of them worth obtaining, what is called the "Large Williams," a print 15in. by 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ in., being the most precious of all, although there was one print announced in 1843, very carefully described, which has never been traced; if it could be found, it would be more important than either of the others.

Collectors are eager to get the original pocket books, with the original illustrations in them, and for these they pay quite high prices. The pocket books began in 1847, and they extended on down to about 1858, at varying intervals; some of them were Scripture pocket books, others were called ladies' pocket books, Cabinets of Fashion, Souvenirs, Pocket Journals, Pocket Albums, etc.; and there are at least twenty pieces of music which bear Baxter's illustrations upon them. I can remember that some of my earliest lessons on the piano were given from Jullien's "Album of Music," on which was a charming illustration by Baxter, called "The Reconciliation." Mr. Lewis says it was printed in eleven blocks. It was issued at about three shillings, and is now easily worth as many pounds, but all the music albums, of which there were many in the nursery where I learned, have long ago passed into the waste-paper basket, to my very great regret.

CHAPTER XIII

CURIOUS OLD WINE

A WELL-KNOWN collector, who has been for years engaged in purchasing fine porcelain, pictures, drawings and other things of similar character, has now turned his attention to quite a different branch of collecting, and part of his museum is contained in two rooms in his cellar. The idea that he has adopted strikes me as being an interesting one, and some of my readers may perhaps be glad to have a few details concerning this somewhat unusual branch of collecting. He is a connoisseur of wines, has given careful attention to them, is sufficiently scrupulous to have two cellars, one for red and one for white, and has great joy in bringing together examples of special and unusual vintages, and affording his friends the satisfaction of sampling and tasting them.

In old days it used to be a fashion to study wine and to take great care concerning the vintages that one placed before one's guests. The stocking of a cellar was part of a gentleman's occupation, and needful information concerning wine was passed on from generation to generation.

Nowadays, when people live in flats, and have only cupboards for their wine, the idea has passed away, and few people care to study the special features of old wines. A well-known connoisseur tells us that we drink far too much champagne nowadays ; " we take it," says he, " from the oysters to the cigars ; we smoke too much to appreciate fine wine ; we seldom sit and enjoy a really good claret." He goes on to add that we " gulp down our wines and do not sip them ; we are sometimes shocking enough to take grape juice and malt liquor in the same night ; we expect wines to taste always as good, whatever the food, the weather, the health or the temper, and we ignore altogether the fact that wine has a scent—a bouquet—as well as a flavour ; that every grape was once a little flower, and that every drop of wine was once hidden within a grape." Finally he says we too " often choose our food first of all, and then choose our drink afterwards, whereas, in many instances, the reverse should be the case, and we are too ready to drink heavy wines, in the way of fruity ports, neglecting bouquet, style and finesse, and spoiling our palate for the more exquisite of the clarets."

All this is amazingly true, and so one seldom hears of a cellar-book being carefully kept up ; still more seldom of the catalogue of a wine cellar. One such catalogue lies before me, prepared for Mr. Pierpont Morgan, in a very limited edition,

and issued to his friends, and it contains a wonderful list of wines, because he collected choice vintages in the same way as he did choice pictures, drawings, or miniatures.

My London friend, acting in a much smaller method, has pursued the same sort of line. In clarets, he naturally gives the principal place to what are known as the first growths, Lafite, Margaux, Latour and Haut-Brion. These are the great clarets, and every one of them is a joy to a carefully prepared palate.

Then, he knows that there are great claret years ; that 1875 was the largest and finest on record ; that 1887 was very good, full and round, but also rather dry ; that 1890 yielded what is known as a big vintage, and 1893 one with a fine flavour, and that 1899 was a splendid vintage ; while some other years, of course, must be carefully avoided. One would not, however, confine one's attention in claret to these four great growths, because there are two or three other growths that are quite as remarkable, and amongst them stands out pre-eminently the Château Mouton Rothschild of 1874. That year, as all claret lovers know, was a very strange, variable one. Some of the vintages were good, and some were poor, but the Château Mouton Rothschild of that year was extraordinary ; it was a wonderfully robust wine, and my friend is lucky enough to possess some of the magnums of it, a very choice

and exceptional possession. There are also some magnums of a very old claret, Lafite of 1869, some of Margaux of 1888, and a wonderful Latour of 1878, while of the smaller brands, I notice particularly some D'Issan in magnums of 1893, and he has not neglected another famous growth called Pape-Clement.

Naturally, however, he has not confined his attention to clarets. Port has been called the king of wines. Madeira has been dubbed the queen, but a person who really appreciates a fine wine, may be pardoned for putting clarets and burgundies ahead of either of them, only they must be sipped, one must not smoke, and the connoisseur must appreciate the bouquet. I would not, however, say a word against port, especially in certain respects. Taylor's 1890 is as delicate a wine as one could possibly want to drink, and has kept better in the cellar than have some of the earlier vintages, and is therefore less likely to require recorking. Taylor's 1896 is another wonderful wine, and some connoisseurs think that Martinez's 1884 is even better. 1847 was of course the magnificent year, but 1863 was really just as fine.

Of the very old ports, '34 and '47 were the great years, '53 was an excellent wine, '73 a fine wine, '78 a good wine, and '87 was equally good. '93, of course, was disastrous in every possible

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way, and since then, there have been one or two fair years, but nothing that has come up to '87 or '89.

Fortunately, the days of the three-bottle men are all gone. It is not a great deal of port that we drink nowadays, and it is generally either Croft's, Taylor's, Dow's, Sandeman's, Cockburn's or Offley's. Cockburn in magnums of 1887 was a very remarkable wine, so was that of 1878. Sandeman's of 1887 is very well worth collecting. Cockburn's of 1868 is another wonderful wine, but my friend is also recommending those who come after him to start the old idea again of laying down some wine for those who come after us, and he is trusting to his own judgment, and that of his wine merchant (a very remarkable man, by the way), and putting down some clarets and some ports that will be interesting and precious to his children and grandchildren.

In his white wine cellar, some of his wonderful treasures are connected with Château Yquem, the great Sauterne, a wine with a marvellous bouquet and exquisite flavour. It must, of course, be bottled at the Château, and marked with the brand of Lur Saluces, and 1861 and 1870 vintages are amazingly choice treasures, while 1893 is in some ways quite as fine, and 1890 well worth securing. Then, of course, he has got some splendid Deinhards, Berncastler, 1904, an amazingly fine

wine ; 1900, not quite so important, but very nearly so ; 1906, quite a beautiful wine, and some Steinwein and some Steinberger Cabinet, the latter being 1890.

To my own thinking, however, the grandest white wine he possesses is some Montrachet from the Côte d'Or of 1911, Aîné, a perfectly magnificent wine.

By the way, I suggest to him that his Moselles should be drunk without further delay, whereas his hock may go on improving for years.

Why is it, I wonder, that sherry has gone out so suddenly ? It is the only wine that one can take at any time of the day ; it is practically the only wine that never alters so long as it is in the decanter ; it is the very thing to have with a biscuit in the morning, and to degrade it by putting bitters in it, is surely a terrible thing. What can be finer, in my friend's opinion and mine, than a Bristol Cream Sherry, or than an Amontillado, especially that of 1839, and the two wonderful growths of '72 and '78 ?

King Edward put an enormous amount of sherry into the market because he did not care for it ; it should, however, be more popular than it is, and collectors of wine will do well to get hold of some choice sherries ; occasionally the 1815 Solera can be got, and one can then enjoy the delicate flavour of this wine at its best.

One passes naturally from sherry to Madeira, the wine that is coming back again into popularity. There is an amazing Madeira in my friend's cellar of 1836 ; there is a Cossart Gordon of 1830, and another of 1844, and some of the Malmsey Madeiras that have gone round the world are very rich and luscious wines, and nothing can be better with dessert than a glass or two of these old dark-coloured beauties.

I must not, however, go all the way through my friend's cellar, but just spare a few lines to refer to his brandies. There is a great variety of ideas amongst those who appreciate a liqueur brandy. Some swear by Hennessy, others insist that Martell's is the only brandy worth drinking ; personally I prefer Otard, and preferably, the one made in 1830 or 1836, or, if I cannot get that, then 1865 or 1875. My friend has perhaps fifteen different shippings of brandies, and one can take one's choice with great satisfaction. Morgan had some Napoleon brandy, but his most wonderful was a Cognac of 1795, and a Fine Champagne of 1797. He also had some of the wonderful green Chartreuse, in the embossed bottles, which was made at the old monastery, and which is now almost impossible to get, and those of us who are connoisseurs in liqueurs wonder when we are ever going to get a really good Kümmel again because the present stuff is not worth drinking, and if we want a sweet liqueur, we pin our faith to a fine

orange Curaçao, in its original stone *cruchons*, or else we sip with satisfaction a little delicious Benedictine.

A connoisseur in wine delights in the shapes of the bottles and the curious squat appearance of some of them, and in others that have initials stamped into them. He decants his own wine with great care, he carefully keeps and exhibits the cork, but, above all, he drinks his wines and he allows his friends to do the same. Thereby, he is not only a collector and a connoisseur, but a delight and a joy to all who know him.

CHAPTER XIV

EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

THERE have always been able collectors in England interested in Egyptian archæology, and the great national collection is largely indebted for its treasures to the efforts of private collectors. In addition to the collections in the national museums, there are several large private ones, notable amongst which may be mentioned that at Alnwick Castle, formed in the early part of the nineteenth century by Algernon, fourth Duke of Northumberland, and the collection that has been formed by the late Earl of Carnarvon.

To what magnificent proportions this collection will eventually grow remains to be proved. No one yet can tell what, out of the glories recently discovered at Luxor by Lord Carnarvon, and his able searcher, Mr. Howard Carter, will fall to Highclere Castle, but all of us who are interested in Egyptian antiquities hope that the Egyptian Government will show itself generous towards the man who spent so many thousands of pounds upon excavation, and will permit his widow to

possess some of the choice treasures which he sacrificed his life to discover.

The world has become remarkably familiar with Egyptian art in these days, owing to the excellent photographs taken by Mr. Harry Burton, that have appeared in *The Times* and other journals, with reference to the amazing discoveries that have been made.

Previous to these investigations, the most notable collection of Egyptian antiquities ever brought together was that which was exhibited in 1921 at the Burlington Fine Arts Club. In the little gallery of that club there were presented many objects so fine that connoisseurs were amazed at their perfection, and some of the most notable amongst their number had little idea that Egyptian art was capable of producing sculptures and decoration of such extraordinary beauty. A great many of the things exhibited in the gallery of the club were later on sold at Sotheby's for very high prices, one notable head, the finest known example of Egyptian sculpture, fetching no less than £10,000. It would almost appear, however, as though all our ideas of the perfection of Egyptian art were to be re-estimated, in view of all the fine things that this newly-opened tomb presented to us.

It is only the great collector who can afford to indulge his hobby to the extent of purchasing the very choice things, but there are a large number of

small collectors who are gradually forming very interesting collections, and there are constant opportunities for such persons to buy beautiful and interesting Egyptian curiosities, for they are often exposed for sale in the auction-rooms and in the shops of the dealers. There are certain things in Egyptian art that are fairly easy to get hold of. The sepulchral figures called *Ushabti*, or "respondents," are often to be found. These are the figures which were deposited with the dead to absolve the deceased in the future state from certain duties which he was supposed to be called upon to perform. They bear upon them, as a rule, the names of the persons for whom they were made, together with their titles and positions, and in some cases the names of the monarchs. They are often beautiful in colour, of the glorious vitreous blue of which the Egyptians only possessed the secret, and merely from the point of colour are beautiful, but they are of great importance in history because from them we have been able, more or less, to complete the list of monarchs of Egypt. We are in danger sometimes, in thinking of Egypt, to imagine that Egyptian art was always far in advance of that of other nations, ignoring the fact that what we call Egyptian antiquity spread over a period which started before 3400 B.C. and extended down to A.D. 400, ranging from what is known as the pre-historic and pre-dynastic period, through the

various dynasties, from the first down to the thirtieth, then to the Ptolemy period and the Roman period. During all this vast period of time, there were waves of progress and depression, periods in which Egyptian art was magnificent and supreme, and periods in which it was inferior to that of other nationalities. In its supreme time, it was in certain particular respects even grander than Greek art, and there are certain pieces, notably one that was once in the MacGregor collection, and another in the Highclere Castle collection, which are amongst the greatest pieces of portraiture in sculpture that art ever produced.

The Egyptian objects that are easiest to obtain are scarabs. Why exactly the ancient Egyptians attached so much importance to figures of the dung beetle, the *scarabæus*, we are not even now quite certain, but they compared the pellet which the beetle rolls to the globe of the sun, and they regarded the insect as sacred to the sun god, and as representing the sun, and thus to a certain extent, especially when supplied with outstretched wings, as typical of the vivifying soul. These scarabs were laid upon the breast of the mummies, and others were placed about the body, and they were also used as seals, and as the bezels of finger rings. In consequence, there are an enormous number of them, and many are of peculiar interest. by reason of the hieroglyphics inscribed upon them. Sometimes they are inscribed with refer-

ences to the various divinities, with military devices, or the names of priests, or monarchs. They appear as pendants upon necklaces, in rows for bracelets, and in all kinds of arrangements for feminine decoration. They vary in colour and in size, extending from the gigantic monstrous ones that are huge monuments, down to the very tiny ones used in seal rings.

Collectors must be warned that there are multitudes of forgeries about, that nothing is much easier to forge than a blue vitreous scarab, and that these forgeries are even buried in suitable places, so that they may be exhumed and create a sensation. It is impossible to educate the collector how to distinguish a forged scarab from the real one, although in some instances the very feel of the forgery gives away the trick, but it is only by careful study of genuine scarabs, and by consulting those who really do understand the subject, that the collector can avoid disappointment.

The ancient Egyptian women were very fond of decoration, and a great part of the objects that collectors seek for are connected with the costume and toilet of the people; the necklaces and strings of beads are often very beautiful, the beads composed of jasper, red and dark green, porcelain, glass, garnet, carnelian, shell and crystal. There are mirrors and combs to be found, cases for holding cosmetics, sandals and the boxes for holding them, signets and finger rings in mul-

titudes, toilet vases, and amongst the great treasures exhibited by Lord Carnarvon at the Burlington Fine Arts Club was the most amazing toilet box of wood veneered with ebony and ivory which belonged to the twelfth dynasty, say a period of over 2000 B.C., and which had its toilet vases, and its silver ornaments and knobs and its veneer of ivory almost complete, as it was deposited in the tomb at Thebes where it was found.

Near to that, and belonging to the same period and collector, was an almost equally wonderful thing—a gaming board of wood and ivory, with its little drawer and its holes to receive the ten gaming pins, which were also with it.

Then there are all kinds of vases, from the very tiny ones used to contain unguents, to those of enormous size made of aragonite, alabaster, granite, porcelain, terra-cotta, wood and other materials, and often decorated in wonderful fashion with hieroglyphic inscriptions. One of the common objects for collectors is the symbolic eye, *uta*, consisting of an eye with two appendages, which seems to represent the eye of the cow of Athor, the mystical mother of the Sun, with the fluid dropping from it. The right eye was the symbol of the sun, the left of the moon, and eyes were used as charms and amulets, and formed portions of necklaces and decoration.

There are all kinds of writing utensils found, and papyri. There are the wooden boxes called

teb, with covers and ties, which were to hold objects of attire, and papyri; there are the extraordinary spoons or small bowls made of wood and ivory, and basalt and shell; there are bronze tools, chisels, adzes, knives, saws and mortising tools; and then there is that very large group of models of animals, because secondary to the worship of the gods was, in Egypt, that of the worship of sacred animals. The Egyptians grouped all animals as either sacred or profane, and the sacred ones lived in the courts of the temples. The animals not deemed sacred were either those into which the soul of Set might have been thought to have divided, or those into which such souls as transmigrated passed, and even the deities who were hated had animals sacred to them, such as the hippopotamus, the pig and the ass. There are models of the ape, lion, jackal, ram, bull, hare, sphinx, and large numbers representing the cat—the sacred animal of the goddess Bast Bubastis—to be found; there are many representations of the hawk, the emblem of the god Horus; and one also finds the duck, crocodile, vulture, uraeus serpent, toad, frog and fish amongst these models.

The smaller collector is hardly likely to obtain a complete mummy, but he may get hold of a piece of mummy cloth, of portions of the woodwork in which the mummy was enclosed, sometimes gorgeously decorated, strings of mummy

beads or pieces of decoration, especially painted limestone figures, some of which are of extraordinary beauty. Lord Carnarvon's limestone statue of a lady of rank, a piece of painted portraiture belonging to the Fourth dynasty, is quite one of the wonderful things of the world, and yet, even in their way, some of the smaller figures that may come into the possession of the amateur collector are, in proportion, almost as beautiful. There are plenty of opportunities for advantage in a collection of Egyptian antiquities, there is ample scope for speculation; scarabs bought for a very small sum often turn out to be valuable and rare; portions of statues, especially painted limestone work, are precious, and the collector who brings together examples of Egyptian art has an enormously wide field for study, and the pleasure of accumulating objects of remarkable beauty.

If he confines his attention, say, to only one section, that of glass, he will find the beads, bottles or pieces of broken cups objects of extreme charm, full of diversity and intrinsic beauty.

The whole section is far too large to be dealt with *en bloc*—collectors must specialise as to what section will particularly interest them, but the whole subject is full of mystery, and the inscriptions, when unravelled, open up stories of peculiar importance and reveal information about historic events about which we know far too little.

CHAPTER XV

DIAMONDS WITH A HISTORY

IN June, 1909, I had the high privilege of having in my hands two or three very famous stones, one of which was unique in its value and importance. It was the Hope Blue Diamond. This extraordinary and beautiful stone was really a large part of a great diamond weighing nearly sixty-eight carats, which at one time belonged to the French Crown jewels. In 1660 it was in the possession of Jean Baptiste Tavernier (1605-1686), the traveller, the author of an important book on journeys in Turkey and Persia. He sold it to the King of France in 1668, and soon after he had parted with it, although he was eighty-one years old, he went off to the East, and there had a serious attack of fever and died.

Madame de Montespan persuaded Louis XIV to give her the famous diamond. No sooner did she get it than her power over the King began to wane, and Madame de Maintenon became the reigning favourite. Fouquet, who was the grand treasurer, borrowed it once and wore it at a very important fête. Shortly afterwards he was

imprisoned, and a little later on, on the 6th of April, 1680, he died.

Then we hear nothing very much of this wonderful stone, which rested in my hands for a few minutes, until Marie Antoinette wore it at a great ball at the Tuileries, and occasionally, it is said, she lent it to her particular friend, Madame de Lamballe. Both the Queen and the Princess perished at the time of the Revolution. During all this time it had been in the original condition that it was when Tavernier first acquired it, although we do not know exactly where he got it ; but, after the Revolution, it was decided to cut it and alter its shape, and it was handed over to a man named Fals, in Holland. His son stole it, the father was ruined, the son killed himself. Previous to his doing so he gave it, in payment of a debt which he dared not acknowledge to his father, to a man named Francis Beaulieu, who came from Marseilles to London with the endeavour to sell it. He fell terribly ill from jail fever and died in a poor humble lodging. Just before his death he arranged with a London jewel dealer, whose name was Daniel Eliason, to buy the diamond, but when Eliason went round to pay over the money Beaulieu was dead and the money never changed hands.

Eliason killed himself some months afterwards, but before he did so he sold the diamond (this was in about 1830) to Henry Thomas Hope of

Deepdene, the son of "Anastatious" Hope, a man who was collecting pictures and fine things. It is always said that Hope gave eighteen or twenty thousand pounds for it, although it had been valued then at thirty thousand pounds, but this was all the money he would pay for it, and Eliason could not afford to hold it any longer.

Hope kept the diamond for a great many years, and it has always been known after his time as the Hope diamond and as the finest and largest blue diamond in the world, now only weighing $44\frac{1}{4}$ carats instead of $67\frac{1}{2}$, but enormously improved in appearance by its recutting, and in shape not a circle but a rather short oval, the colour being almost that of a very fine sapphire. From Hope it came down to Lord Henry Francis Hope, and his wife, who was well known as May Yohe, used to wear it. He had to divorce her in 1902 and the diamond passed out of his collection.

A merchant in Hatton Garden, named Weil, bought it, and transferred it almost at once to an American merchant named Simon Frankel. But from the moment he possessed it he had endless financial troubles and worries, and after a while, had to get rid of the diamond in desperation, in the hope of saving his affairs. This was in 1907. In 1908 it came into the possession of a French dealer named Jacques Colot, who almost at once sold it to a Russian Prince, Kanitovski, who

lent it to his mistress, a beautiful actress named Ladue.

She wore it at the Folies Bergère, and when she had it on the Prince shot her with a revolver and regained possession of the diamond. Two days afterwards he was stabbed. Colot, who had never received the whole of the purchase money, went out of his mind, and a week after this episode he committed suicide. Before Kanitovski died he had transferred the diamond to a French dealer, who fell downstairs and broke his leg. He sold it to Montharides, a Greek, who took it to Athens, and very shortly afterwards was captured by brigands, thrown over a precipice and killed, with his wife and his two children. He had just sold the stone to the Sultan of Turkey, Abdul Hamid.

It is not quite certain that the Sultan ever actually had it in his possession. It was given to a man named Abu Sabir to be polished. Abu Sabir said he had never had it, and he played the Sultan false. He was punished, thrown into a dungeon and there remained for some months. The diamond meantime disappeared. Then it was found in the possession of the keeper of the dungeon, and one fine morning he was found strangled. In some mysterious way or other it then passed into the possession of one of the eunuchs of the Sultan's household, a man named Kulub Bey, and he was captured in the streets

of Constantinople and hanged on a lamp-post. Meantime, a beautiful French girl had got hold of the diamond, one whom the Sultan very much admired. She had assumed a Turkish name and she was known as Salma Zubayba, and she was wearing it when the revolutionaries broke into the Sultan's palace, and when she was killed the diamond was on her breast.

Thence it came into the possession of a Turk named Habib, a jewel merchant in Constantinople. He perished in a shipwreck in the Moluccas, and it was declared that at last the story of the jewel was at an end as he must have had it in his pocket. But it was not so—he had left it in Paris, and it came into the possession of Messrs. Cartier, who exhibited it in the Haymarket, and there it was that I saw it and handled it.

It was sold in Paris on the 22nd of June of that year, at the Habib sale, by Bailly & Appert for, it is said, £16,000, and a French dealer who bought it for £28,000 sold it to Mr. Edward B. McLean in America for £60,000. He gave it to his wife, who was a Miss Walsh, the daughter of a famous American mine owner. Mr. Edward Beale McLean had one son, Vincent Walsh, who was reckoned at one time as the richest child in the world, because he was to succeed to the fortunes of his two grandparents, John McLean, the owner of the *Washington Post* and of the *Cincinnati Inquirer*, and Thomas E. Walsh, the Colorado

mining king. The child's name was Vincent Walsh McLean, and from the time of his birth he was subject to very special precautions, as his parents had been told that he would be kidnapped.

The house and grounds where he lived were surrounded with steel fences and there were guards to protect him in all directions. The boy was restless under all this care. He was allowed no companions, his only joy being the animals that were about him, which included some wonderful dogs, and especially a Russian wolf-hound which was considered to be the best of its race ; but the child was never alone, either his nurse or his attendants being always on hand. When he was only eight months old an attempt was made to kidnap him, and then an iron perambulator was procured in which he used to be wheeled about and view the world through a cage of steel bars. His grandfather had given him a rosewood and gold cradle.

One day one of the boy's pet dogs escaped, and the lad, in great joy at getting away from his guardians, ran through the front gates of his house, down the street, accompanied by various other boys ; but he was soon caught and brought back again. He made up his mind, however, to get away as soon as he could and, a similar circumstance happening soon afterwards, he slipped out of the gates again, ran down the street, and was knocked down by a motor-car and run over.

Both his parents were then away at a race-course in Kentucky. They came back by special train, they telegraphed for doctors and specialists and nurses, but the boy died before his mother could reach his bedside. She had always been anxious about him since she had possessed the great diamond. She tried to persuade her husband to refuse to complete the bargain, but the dealer sued Mr. McLean to carry out his contract and reduced the price to thirty-six thousand, according to one account; and to forty-two thousand according to another; and then it was that McLean took possession of it and gave it to his wife. Three months after she had it her mother, of whom she was passionately fond, died after a sharp and sudden attack of pneumonia. Then she lost her boy, and the effect upon her is said to have been so terrible that, within a few hours, she was herself insane.

The story goes that the diamond originally came from a Hindoo temple and that it was the eye of a famous god, and that all who possessed it were cursed after it had been stolen and the curse was to descend to every owner so long as the diamond existed. What exactly has happened to it since Mrs. McLean went out of her mind is not quite certain. There have been various rumours, but the best credited is that the diamond is in a safe deposit in New York and that it is likely to remain there for a very long time. It is said that

it has been re-cut and a piece of it taken away so that it should no longer be the same diamond that it was, and that this has been done in the hope (no pun intended) that its tragic history should end and that future owners of this exceedingly beautiful stone should not have all the succession of troubles which have come to those who have owned it in previous years.

With it, at the Habib sale, there were sold some other splendid stones, including a diamond known as the Princesse Mathilde, which was dazzlingly white, and which sold for £2,280.

There was also offered an aquamarine diamond, very much the same size as a stone which now belongs to the English Crown, and which was extraordinarily curious in its colour qualities because, in certain lights it was almost blue, and under others almost green. That fetched £5,600. It was a much larger one than the stone of Princesse Mathilde and weighed over seventy carats, whereas her wonderful white one only weighed sixteen.

The other important Habib diamond was the Mi Regent, a pear-shaped stone, which weighed fifty-eight carats and fetched £7,400; and the same sale included a wonderful pink diamond of thirty-one carats, a bluish-white one of twenty-three carats which fetched £3,120, a pear-shaped diamond of twenty-four carats, and a rosy one of six carats, the whole of the little group fetching

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about forty thousand pounds, or rather more ; but the importance of these other diamonds was entirely overshadowed by the long and tragic history which was associated with the famous treasure of the collection—the celebrated Hope blue diamond.

CHAPTER XVI

PRINTS BY LE BLOND

SO many persons are interested in the prints executed under Baxter's licence by Le Blond that some brief information concerning them is worth noting down.

Let me make it clear that there must be no confusion between the very different persons, Le Blon and Le Blond. The confusion has been made by some collectors. Le Blon was born at Frankfort in 1670, and at one time a painter in miniature, but in 1720 he came to London and started a process for printing mezzotint plates in colour. He published a work ten years later explanatory of his process. It came out both in English and in French. Two years after that he went to Paris and there, a few years later on, he died, it is said, in 1741. He was a clever workman, a master of the mystery of colour in printing, and some of his portraits—those of George II and Louis XIV—and his landscapes are worth collecting, but do not very often come into the market.

The Le Blonds were different people altogether. There was a Jean Le Blond, born in Paris in

1635, a print seller, and he is said to have executed certain colour prints, but it is doubtful whether this statement is correct. He died in 1709. The Le Blond who worked under Baxter's licence is a man of 1850 period, who printed in Baxter's manner and under his licence, till about 1868, when Baxter's own plates and blocks came into his hands, and he reprinted from them. Hence there are two groups of Le Blond nineteenth century prints, those which are Le Blond's own, about thirty-two in number, mostly ovals, and those printed from Baxter's plates and blocks, and not as satisfactory. Le Blond himself executed an important picture of a Highland lake, some landscapes, called "In the North of Scotland," "Galway Peasants," "Forget-me-nots," "Virginia Water," "The Heather," and others, large-sized prints as a rule, although there are also some small ones; and then, after 1868, he printed what are known as Le Blond-Baxters. Baxter's plates, which bore his signature in the body, had the signature erased when Le Blond printed from them, but it is not absolutely certain that this always took place. There are a few prints that bear Baxter's signature only, but are clearly the work of Le Blond, because they are colder and less brilliant in effect than they would have been if they had been Baxter's.

Then, there are many Le Blond prints that

bear Le Blond's own name, and there are, unfortunately, in the market a great many Le Blond prints in which Le Blond's own name has been cut off, in order that the print should be passed as one of those by Baxter. The cutting-off of the signature alters the prints in size, and it is generally the size that enables the expert to know whether it is a damaged Le Blond print that is before him or a genuine work by Baxter. There are even still more clever forgeries, because in some cases, where Baxter's signature is rather high up in the front, as for example in two which Mr. Lewis refers to, "The Third Day He Rose Again" and "Little Red Riding-hood"; it was impossible to remove the signature without destroying the print, and the signature was carefully coloured over by hand, so that the print might pass off as one by Baxter.

Of the two issues of one of Baxter's most beautiful prints, "The Bride," the second plate passed into the hands of Le Blond, and was issued by him with his signature. It is a plate 5" \times 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". He also issued "The Exterior of the Crystal Palace," two Australian scenes, "News from Home," and "News from Australia," "The Charge of the British Troops on the Road to Windlesham," the portrait of the Prince of Wales, and one of the Princess Royal, Crown Princess of Prussia; a picture of Jenny Lind, called "The Daughter of the Regiment"; the Emperor

Napoleon I, the Duke of Wellington, Napoleon III, the Empress Eugénie, "The Nativity" and other religious scenes, "The Fruit Girl of the Alps," "The Ascent of Mont Blanc," "Returning from Prayer," "The Circassian Lady at the Bath," "The Mountain Stream," "The Day before Marriage," "Summer," and various others.

In *The Bazaar* for January 21st, 1898, there is a catalogue of the prints that Le Blond made from Baxter plates, but this cannot be taken as absolutely authoritative, although it is a work of importance, because it is declared by some of the best collectors to include certain prints which were never issued at all. The standard work on the subject is that by Mr. C. T. C. Lewis, 1920.

Le Blond's work when he printed from Baxter's plates is not nearly so good as was Baxter's. The prints are often slightly out of register. The complexions of the faces are not pleasing in some cases; they are far too white, having hardly any carnation about them. In others they are a great deal too ruddy, almost of the colour of brick dust. In some instances the colour over the lips is practically, or even entirely missing, and there is an air of an unfinished print about the result, as though the printer had been in too much of a hurry to finish all the details. The ribbons are often lacking in colour, as for example the one on the Duke of Wellington's portrait, which is of a poor, nondescript appearance. Le Blond

never seems to have been able to give all the care to the printing that Baxter himself lavished upon his plates, so that a connoisseur can generally detect, almost in a moment, a real Baxter print from a Le Blond reprint. There are some instances where the Baxter print is a rare thing, and the Le Blond can often be found ; take for example the one of the Princess Royal. The Baxter print, on its original mount, is worth five or six pounds at least, the Le Blond not more than as many shillings. It is easy to detect the difference, because in the Baxter print the jewels of the pendant and ear-rings are not coloured ; in the Le Blond they are, and the flesh carnations in the Le Blond are of an unpleasant red, more like the colour of brick dust.

In other cases it is not so easy to determine. When no colour was used, Le Blond was almost Baxter's equal. The Baxterotype of "It is Finished," which is taken from Vandyck's "Crucifixion," is to be found both printed by Baxter and Le Blond, and Le Blond's is practically as good as is Baxter's. In another one, called "The Saviour," it is said that Le Blond omitted to use one of the blocks, with the result that there is, to use Mr. Lewis's phrase, "a chalky look" about "the high lights," and in the well-known Baxterotype called "The Slaves," published in 1853, the Baxter print has an ivory-like exquisite surface, and is worth about four or five pounds ;

the Le Blond is coarser, and not worth nearly as much. I would not, however, condemn in whole-sale fashion all the Le Blond prints. One called "The Cornfield" is a beautiful thing. The Ovals, too, are wonderful, notably "May Day" and "Fifth of November." "Windsor Castle" is also a fine thing, and so are "Blowing Bubbles," "Wedding Day," "The Ferry," "Snowballing," "Lake Lucerne," and "On the Water." "The Day before Marriage" is almost as well in its print by Le Blond as it is in its print by Baxter. Both were done from the same plate. "The Lovers' Letterbox" is another good Le Blond, and the two prints called "Summer" are both of them excellent examples of Le Blond's work. The original printing by Baxter of the large "Summer" has greater depth of colour and finish, and on the sign of the inn there is an inscription, but Le Blond omits the inscription. In that case, Le Blond's signature is very high up, and this is one where his name is often found coloured over, in order that the print should be passed off as a Baxter. It need not have happened in this case, because the print is a good one and rare. Both that and the small "Summer," in good condition, are worth obtaining.

Le Blond at his best was really good. His "Bride" is a beautiful piece of work, and several of his portraits are thoroughly good and attractive. At his worst he was bad, and the print of the

"Nativity," which is one of Baxter's best, is in Le Blond's hands one of the worst, but some of Le Blond's earlier prints of the Royal Family are beautiful pieces of execution, and are well worth trying to obtain. It will not be easy to get them, because really fine Le Blonds are almost as rare as fine Baxters.

There are thirty of Baxter's unsigned plates from which Le Blond printed, but only three of them are really important: "The Fruit Girl of the Alps," "The Reconciliation" and "The Slaves," and in these Le Blond was nearly Baxter's equal, and the pictures are good. There are three lithographs in colour that belong to Le Blond's work: "Hollyhocks," "The Gardener's Shed" and "Lucerne," and a collector is very glad to get hold of them.

On the whole, the opinion of collectors is that Le Blond was not as conscientious a man as Baxter, but in some cases it was not his fault that the pictures were not as good as Baxter's, because he did not succeed in getting hold of all the necessary blocks.

Some prints are found with both Baxter's name and Le Blond's, Baxter's name appearing on the margin and Le Blond's on the body of the plate, and in these it was expected that the print would be mounted and the plate margin cut off. They are precious, and collectors are eager to get them.

In my chapter on Baxter prints I referred to

the fact that they faded, and must not be exposed to light. This precaution needs emphasis with regard to Le Blond, as his prints fade even more rapidly than do those of Baxter, and as they were originally not as good, there is more in the fact than in a Baxter print. In consequence, the collector of Le Blond's prints has to be very scrupulous, more punctilious, than the collector of Baxter's. He also has to be careful that the prints he wants are complete, that they have not been trimmed, that they are not those where the signatures have been altered, and that, if possible, they should have margins. I have found some collectors of Le Blond prints who actually prefer them to Baxter's, so interested have they become in their collection. They tell me that there are more varieties in Le Blond's than in Baxter's—a cool look about the colouring, which appeals to them more than the brilliance of Baxter prints, and that they look better when they are framed, and are not so obtrusive on the wall. Personally, this is not my opinion, but I agree that many of Le Blond's prints are delightful and I am quite sure they are worth collecting, because they are gradually becoming more and more rare. Moreover collecting tends to push the price up, and as the supply is a limited one, collectors are advised to take the matter in hand and to buy Le Blonds in view of what will certainly be a rising market.

CHAPTER XVII

OLD WEDGWOOD

IT is pleasant to find that English connoisseurs are again beginning to collect Wedgwood ware. Josiah Wedgwood, the potter, was one of the very few original geniuses which England has produced, and it is fitting that the beautiful ware for which he was responsible should again occupy the position for which it is so suitable. The Jasper ware that Wedgwood used was a genuine discovery, his use of sulphate of barium and a small proportion of the carbonate resulting in a ware which is unique and of extraordinary merit, and when on this coloured ware he spread his reliefs in white in exquisite form, he produced one of the most beautiful things that English potters have ever conceived.

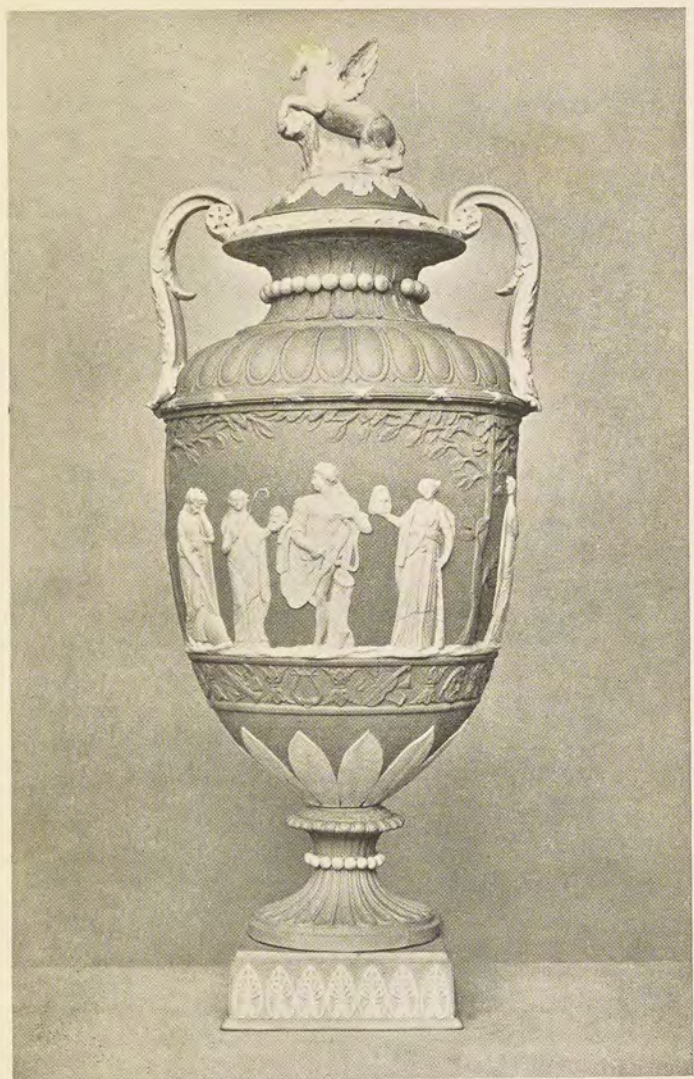
A connoisseur recognises old Wedgwood ware by his fingers even more than by his eyes. There is what is known as the "baby-skin" feel about the work made in Josiah's own time, which has never been counterfeited, and, although the present firm have the old models, and turn out very beautiful things, there is yet that marked

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divergence in texture between their products
and those of the great founder of their firm.

Few things are more lovely than the little
cameos, tablets and medals that Wedgwood
produced: the scent-bottles, étuis, chatelaine
mounts, bell-handles, opera-glasses, vases, boxes,
and above all, the portrait medallions ranging
from tiny things, not much larger than one's
thumb-nail, up to large ovals. Whether they
be in green, lavender or blue, they are equally
beautiful, and if framed and mounted, as they
were in the old days, with cut steel work, they
acquire an increased beauty.

Moreover the Wedgwood collector will not
confine his attention solely to objects made in the
jasper ware; he will have fine examples of black
basalt, which also has a miraculous texture, and
vases, columns and busts of this material will
adorn his cabinets, and he will add to them
examples of the cream ware which Wedgwood
introduced in 1763, the granite, the agate, the
tortoiseshell, the deep red of the terra-cotta
wares, all of which add charm and variety to a
cabinet.

There are, it is said, to be found somewhere in
England a few odd pieces of that wonderful service
which Wedgwood made for Catherine II in 1774.
There are one or two plates, belonging to the
Wedgwoods themselves, to be seen in their
museum; there is a bit in the Mayer collection in



"PEGASUS" VASE, BLUE JASPER, WITH SUBJECT OF APOLLO AND THE
MUSES, MODELLED BY FLAXMAN FOR JOSIAH WEDGWOOD.
HEIGHT, 16 INCHES.



Liverpool, but some of the discarded plates have yet to be found; they bear the emblem of the green frog, and the service itself has represented upon it all the important buildings of England from north to south. I was responsible for its re-discovery in Russia, went there to see it and wrote a big book about it. I wonder what happened to it when the recent disturbances in Russia took place?

Fortunately, Wedgwood was not only a practical potter (he began throwing his own vases in 1759), but also an able chemist, and he gathered about him wonderful helpers, such as Tassie, Hackwood, Gossett and Flaxman, and was assisted by an almost perfect partner in Bentley. There are missing, by the way, a great many of Bentley's letters which Wedgwood cherished very dearly, and which he had bound up, but which seem to have disappeared altogether.

The partnership was an ideal one. Wedgwood was so successful, because he was so enthusiastic, and devoted himself heart and soul to producing the very best that he possibly could, sparing no pains and no trouble in carrying out the details of his pottery.

How well I remember, some years ago, coming upon a little collection of cameos and medallions that had been preserved by the descendants of a man who worked at the factory, and who had put aside, with loving enthusiasm, exquisite examples

of the jasper ware. They had a grace of their own which has never since been equalled.

Wedgwood was particularly fortunate in enlisting the sympathy of Flaxman, whose perfect draughtsmanship and marvellous classical knowledge resulted in such beautiful scenes as the "Bacchanalian Boys," the "Marriage of Cupid and Psyche," "Blind Man's Buff," "Apollo with the Muses," and many similar scenes, and whose skill was responsible for the borders of festoons, leaves and swags which adorn the vases, and for the shell shapes and beautiful handles that appear on many of the pieces of his dinner ware.

The present firm has the great advantage of having taken particular care of its old designs, plates and patterns, so as to be able to revive them, and when, some years ago, I examined the Russian dinner service, which had been lost sight of for nearly a hundred years, it was possible for the present firm to replace broken handles, knobs and ornaments from the original designs, and so make some of the damaged pieces once more perfect.

Gradually, Wedgwood ware is creeping up again in value. For a while, it was under a cloud. Now, its charm is being recognised, and as the supply of choice pieces is very limited, collectors can be strongly recommended (especially those with patriotic sympathies) to start collecting

Wedgwood ware, with a sure sense of joy and a certainty of recompense.

Needless to say, Wedgwood ware was often copied, especially by the potters of his own period and shortly after his decease. Such men as Turner and Adams obtained some of Wedgwood's best productions, and set themselves to copy them, resulting very often in quite excellent pieces of ware, presenting very close resemblances, at first glance, to Wedgwood, but differing altogether in feel and sharp cut from the original. Sometimes these pieces bore the names of the plagiarists, and may be collected for their own sake, but other forgers were much more unscrupulous, and a man named Palmer, for example, was thoroughly unscrupulous, because he not only tried to copy Wedgwood's ware, but forged the name at the bottom of it, and there were two other workers, Neale and Mayer, who were almost as bad. Moreover, some of the medallions were copied at Sèvres, but collectors will soon know how to identify them, as the ware is really quite different.

It will be necessary for the collector to acquaint himself with the way in which the Wedgwood ware is marked, in order that he may distinguish old Wedgwood from that which has lately been made. The present firm is very careful in rendering it quite clear that their work is their own manufacture, and never attempts to pretend

that what they have produced is old work. If the collector gets hold of any of the medallions, especially of the smaller ones, he may be recommended not to exhibit them in too large a quantity, but to put them singly, where they obtain their best effect. If inlaid on étuis or bonbonnières, tea-caddies, patch-boxes or chatelaines, they look far better than they do if merely exhibited in a glass case, and these and pieces of jewellery and ornament mounted with Wedgwood cameos are in the greatest demand amongst skilled collectors.

The cream ware made at Leeds is often confused with Wedgwood cream ware, but Wedgwood is marked, and Leeds very seldom bears the mark. Above all, Wedgwood ware is extraordinarily light, and the mere action of lifting a piece from the cabinet will often tell a connoisseur whether he is handling a genuine piece or not.

One of the wonderful collections was that formed by the late Lord Tweedmouth. It was offered for sale in 1905, and a catalogue was got up by Mr. Rathbone, when suddenly it was all withdrawn, to the disappointment of the Wedgwood collectors of the day. It included some splendid medallions and cameos, but amongst its greatest treasures were some of the wax models from which Wedgwood made his ware. It had also two of the wonderful Portland vases, perhaps the greatest things that Wedgwood ever made, the

most perfect reproduction of the famous glass Barberini vase, which is generally known from having belonged to the Duchess of Portland as the Portland Vase. This is the vase that was broken by a lunatic, and has now been carefully pieced together, and is one of the great treasures in the Gold Room of the British Museum.

The Wedgwood is now in the Leverhulme museum at Port Sunlight.

CHAPTER XVIII

DINANDERIE

AS the metal work which originated at Dinant was bronze, and not brass, Dinanderie is a phrase that should only be applied to objects wrought in bronze, although it certainly has been used in later days in connection with other metals, specially copper and brass.

There were, for many generations, notable craftsmen who worked in bronze, and some of the very greatest pieces of metal work in Europe are in this material. One has only to think of the magnificent tomb of Maximilian in Innsbruck, with its gigantic figures of knights surrounding it, and of the amazing shrine of St. Sebald in Nuremberg, to recall two of the grandest examples of bronze work that Europe contains.

All who have visited Italy and Spain will be familiar with the superb bronze decoration of the various cathedral doors, with the knockers and handles that adorn these doors, with the fonts and lecterns that are to be found inside the cathedrals, with the smaller objects intended for altar use, such as the boxes, reliquaries, altar

crosses, censers, candlesticks and croziers, with the dragons that form the top ornaments of the spires, and with the bells which hang beneath them. Many of these are wrought with superb craftsmanship, and are objects of the highest value from an artistic point of view.

It is not given to the modern collector to be able to obtain such objects as these. He can enjoy and appreciate them in their places, and he knows the wonderful work contained in many of the door panels and the exquisite beauty of the shrines and the reliquaries. Occasionally, however, he is able to obtain some of the smaller examples of fine bronze work, and there were two collectors in recent days—Mr. John Edward Taylor and Mr. William Newall—who were fortunate enough to gather within their grasp many wonderful examples of bronze work, and to give to their successors the joy of discovering that the objects which they had selected with wise discretion in early days had become enormously enhanced in value, and fetched very substantial sums. Quite recently a wonderful knocker in bronze, the work of the great Paduan bronze worker of the sixteenth century, Riccio, an object only eleven inches long, fetched two thousand five hundred guineas, and although this price was not equalled by other things in the same collection, yet there were many objects that Mr. Newall had brought together that fetched

very high prices. A salt-cellar went for four hundred and forty guineas, some of the figures fetched from eight hundred to a thousand guineas apiece, a fountain realised one thousand eight hundred guineas, and a pair of gilt altar candlesticks three hundred and forty guineas, and a fine inkstand two hundred and fifty guineas.

Among Mr. Taylor's collection there was one figure which fetched nearly seventeen hundred pounds, a German mortar that fetched six hundred, a single candlestick that fetched nearly sixteen hundred, an amazing inkstand, only ten inches high, which fetched £3,255, and many candlesticks, figures and groups which went for very big prices indeed. The inkstand had been bought as recently as 1888 for £204 10s., the other inkstand came from the Spitzer collection in 1893, when it sold for seven hundred pounds, but each of these two items in Mr. Taylor's sale realised over three thousand and this price was exceeded by some of the bronze figures, and many of the others came very close to it.

More remarkable still, perhaps, was a pair of large andirons, of sixteenth century Venetian work, which have been traced in three different collections, where they fetched first of all about a hundred and eighty pounds, then about four hundred, and then about a thousand, selling in 1912 for very nearly ten thousand. In the case of a pyx of copper gilt, there was very much the

same state of affairs. At one time it sold for a hundred pounds. In the Taylor collection it fetched three thousand two hundred and fifty-five, and a pair of candlesticks, far older, going back to the thirteenth century, sold as recently as 1892 for eighty-two pounds, and a very few years later five hundred pounds was gladly given for them.

To the collector who has some money to invest there are chances with regard to bronze things almost unequalled, but the greatest care is needed in purchase, because there are innumerable forgeries, and, moreover, the collector must be possessed of what the French call *flair*, in order to detect fine things at a glance. It is impossible for me, in these columns, to explain the difference between a genuine old bronze and a modern one.

I have myself been taken in by what appeared to me to be a genuine bronze but which turned out to be imitation, and there are only a few men whose judgment can be relied upon with absolute certainty in such a determination, so clever are the modern forgeries. At the same time, there are few things more beautiful than a fine Italian bronze, with its exquisite surface, and the wonderful colour of what is called its *patina*, and there is hardly any field open to the collector who is possessed of a certain amount of money at his disposal, more interesting than the collecting of such objects, especially those that are Italian or French, in bronze or in bronze and enamel.

Smaller English collectors can derive a good deal of joy from objects of much less importance. There are bronze mortars yet to be found in curiosity shops worth careful examination and often worth purchase, and, to descend to lower levels still, there are objects in brass (such as a collection of candlesticks), and in copper, that are very decorative in the room, especially when set against old oak, and are well worth acquiring. Few things light up a room better than brass and copper, and where set against black oak, dark paint or panelling, a group of treasures in brass, copper and bronze gives a luminous effect to what might otherwise be a dingy corner in a room and brightens up the whole effect of the place. Such a thing as a brass warming-pan, a skimmer, a bronze bell, a brass figure, a group of candlesticks, especially those with a broad circular saucer in the centre which protected the hand of the person who carried it from the hot grease, is a source of delight and a pleasure to look at. To some people it is almost a sacrilege to lacquer this sort of thing, but to those who have few opportunities of keeping them in order a coat of lacquer is an advantage and saves endless trouble and elbow-grease, and for those who do not scorn small returns the collection of old English candlesticks and mortars gives a pleasing opportunity.

There is a steady and increasing demand for

objects in metal. Old candlesticks bought for a few shillings are often worth as many pounds ; but here again the collector must be on the alert, because the forger has been ahead and candlesticks one sees on farm-house mantelpieces have often been placed there by a local dealer for the wayfarer to admire and eventually to purchase at a price wholly beyond their original value.

For persons who wander about the country and visit all the old curiosity shops there is great joy in searching for pieces of Italian bronze and trying to detect them by means of their exquisite surface and their wonderful colour and, failing to obtain these, bringing home in triumph some bit of old English brass or copper work purchased perhaps for a very small sum, and tending to delight the eye in the room of the collector and eventually, if he sees fit, to yield him a handsome profit on his original investment.

One of the greatest and ablest collectors of bronzes in modern time is Mr. J. P. Heseltine. His collection of Italian bronze figures now belonging to Mr. Alfred Spero, one of our cleverest young experts, is almost unrivalled and includes specimens of paramount importance.

CHAPTER XIX

AUTOGRAPHS

THE collector of autographs has one special advantage over almost all other collectors; an advantage, by the way, that he shares with the collectors of illuminated MSS. Every item in his collection is unique. No man or woman is in the habit of writing two letters in exactly similar form. At the outset let me say that by the collector of autographs I do not mean the collector of bare signatures. Signatures are all very well in their way and are interesting, but a signature cut from a letter has lost the larger part of its importance and has become little more than a curiosity.

In one of the books on autographs there is a story of a person who presented to a collector a bunch of signatures of Samuel Pepys, the diarist, stating that, for convenience of handling, he had cut them off from the letters because he thought that collectors only cared for signatures. As signatures they were worth a few shillings, the complete letters would have been worth many pounds each, and if they had been interesting letters, a very large sum.

There are circumstances, of course, where only signatures can be obtained. An old attendance book in connection with the Royal Society once came into the possession of an acquaintance of mine; it was nothing more than signatures, but he unwisely cut all the book up and put the signatures into his album in groups. There again a mistake was made, because they would have been much more important all kept together in one book. Occasionally, on documents, there are only signatures, but even those are much better kept on the documents to which they belong than cut out for a collector's album. But the real collector of autographs is not the autograph fiend who simply tries to obtain signatures, or purchase them, but the student who is on the look-out for complete letters or documents that have an historic or literary interest, and oftentimes there are treasures to be obtained.

Just now the demand is for letters connected with literary people, notably poets. One single letter of John Keats sold, in 1909, in the Haber collection, for five hundred pounds. It was, of course, an exceedingly important and interesting letter, but it only cost Mr. Haber about thirty pounds; and other letters sold at the same sale, although not realising such a price as this one, showed considerable advances on the prices Mr. Haber had originally paid for them. The life of

Keats was short and so interesting that there will always be a great demand for his letters.

Shelley's letters are almost as rare. Even an autograph receipt signed by Shelley fetched fifteen pounds only a little while ago.

Swinburne's letters are rare, but autograph poems by Swinburne are a great deal more precious—the autograph of his poem "East to West" fetched about twenty pounds. An essay that he wrote on one of Shakespeare's plays sold for twenty pounds; but some of his MSS. have fetched considerably more than that; for example, in a recent catalogue there was a MS. essay written in defence of certain of his writings, only six pages, priced at fifty-six pounds; and another, written in conjunction with Rossetti, was worth a hundred pounds.

Stevenson's letters are very much in request amongst collectors, and only a few weeks ago several were sold at Christie's for high prices, while for a MS. there was great competition and it fetched a very substantial figure, and it fell into the hands of an important American collector. There is always a steady demand for essays or poems by any of the noted English literary men of the eighteenth century, and as the supply is very limited, such prices are sure to increase year by year.

Letters from Dickens and Thackeray also fetch substantial prices, while autographs concerning

Dr. Johnson are most eagerly desired and generally find their way to the other side of the Atlantic into a very famous Johnsonian collection, about which there was issued last year a privately printed catalogue containing details of the greatest interest. For this particular collection there has been gathered up almost everything that has come into the market about Dr. Johnson or Boswell, together with a vast number of autograph letters of persons who are mentioned in Boswell's "Life of Johnson," or who came into contact with Johnson himself or who had any practical or intimate connection with him.

Autograph collectors as a rule specialise, taking some particular period or person and endeavouring to collect everything relative to it. A favourite method of mounting autographs is to extra-illustrate some well-known book. Fanny Burney's "Diary," the "Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds," the "Life of Garrick," Bryan's "Dictionary of Artists," and many similar works, are extended by collectors into numerous volumes by the addition of autograph letters written by persons referred to in their pages, accompanied in many cases by illustrations of the persons or of the scenes referred to in the volumes in question. Mounted up in this way autograph letters acquire very special interest. It is delightful to find in a volume about Lord Nelson some of his original dispatches, several of his letters to Lady

Hamilton, perhaps a letter or two to his own daughter, and other correspondence concerning the great Admiral.

I remember only some short time ago seeing a volume on Napoleon, containing many of his letters mounted inside it, together with his own drawings for the arrangement of his troops, communications to his marshals, some of his own personal letters, and two remarkable ones addressed to the Empress Josephine. There are not many collectors who are in a position to carry out work of this kind, and in some cases a collection is simply contained within the covers of a collector's album, but the great thing is to obtain interesting letters and characteristic ones.

Some collectors specialise in the works of musicians. There was an amazing collection offered some time ago of autographs of Mendelssohn: over two hundred letters, many MS. scores, and all kinds of relics relative to the musician had been all brought together with a great deal of loving care, and then, at the death of the owner, were put into the market. Here was an opportunity in this collection of having a vast amount of unpublished material relative to Mendelssohn.

Some years ago I saw a beautiful letter from Cardinal Newman in which, at the request of a friend, he had written out the first verse of "Lead, kindly Light." This was a precious thing and

was very highly valued by its owner. In a famous library in New York there is the original MS. of another hymn, "Rock of Ages," written out by Augustus Toplady, and, more important still, Heber's original draft for "From Greenland's icy mountains," written on the vestry paper of the church where the hymn was first sung. No one is surprised that there is great competition for documents of that sort and that collectors are glad to pay substantial prices for them.

There is a great demand for autograph correspondence by William Penn, and perhaps an even greater demand for autograph letters by Washington. There are several American collectors who strive to obtain a specimen of the handwriting of every one of the persons who signed the Declaration of Independence. Of that of one of the signers I believe it is impossible to get anything, and of another only one or two signatures are known; but of several of them there are letters to be obtained, and these, of course, have a very special interest to the collector on the other side of the Atlantic.

Then there are collectors who go very much farther back than the days of Penn and Washington for their special treasures. Some time ago the most important letter written by Cardinal Pole came into the market and fetched, if I am not mistaken, nearly fifty pounds, and documents relating to his period are always in demand.

Possibly, some day or the other, some of the long lost love-letters of Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn may be recovered. They were sent out to Rome and some are still to be seen in the Vatican library, but no one knows for certain what has become of the best. It is very seldom that anything more than signatures of the Tudor Kings of England can be obtained. A few holograph letters of Queen Elizabeth are known, but as a rule the body of her letters was in someone else's handwriting, and she only supplied the famous square signature with its elaborate flourishes, which is so well known. Hers was, perhaps, the most wonderful and striking signature of any of the English Sovereigns.

Some writers alter their handwriting according to the period of their life. There were two distinct handwritings of Thackeray's. There are several very varying signatures of Charles Dickens. In 1830 there was no flourish under his name; in 1831 a simple double flourish, which became more florid in the following year and increased in the number of strokes year by year, until, in 1837, there were seven distinct loops underneath the signature. Then suddenly, in the next year, he altered the position of these loops, and instead of their being under the letter "C" and to the left of the signature, they all appear at the other end of the signature under the word "Dickens," and so they continued down to his decease,

one very long & sweet
 I. A. B. C. D. E. F. G. H. I. J. K. L. M. N. O. P. Q. R. S. T. U. V. W. X. Y. Z.

I have been thinking of you very much lately, and how
 it may come strong to you, if we should once discharge to
 hold our station in my care, for now I am of English
 Condition, being always, always, rather to command
 others, to suffer men of Profession. But such as
 please at this time, by the opportunity of this, I hope
 I may now repay you, to let you know I
 we remember you, as we are well intent to take care
 from by our best, to express our great desire to have
 it your well doing, where we were right glad by
 I last Report to understand as then we did, hoping
 well of our success in the future now you have in
 hand, it is good to see you with good and perfect health
 to be principally de liver. Promised always, you do
 not remain this our good blessing, in observing our
 tradition, care of you, to our King the King's health
 who may by this our Contrivance to you about your
 self, rather in favouring them at home, whom we
 not have any power to pay, but we are, for always their
 wide measure. And that we in this time, to this as
 I should have made in this, giving you of our most
 interest, how to go forth, and day by day, of your
 interest, I am sure, you will be able to do as our
 friend you have. Dated at our Court at Windsor
 the 11th of June 1677.

FACSIMILE OF A LETTER FROM QUEEN ELIZABETH
 TO GEORGE, EARL OF CUMBERLAND.

I have been thinking of you very much lately, and how
 it may come strong to you, if we should once discharge to
 hold our station in my care, for now I am of English
 Condition, being always, always, rather to command
 others, to suffer men of Profession. But such as
 please at this time, by the opportunity of this, I hope
 I may now repay you, to let you know I
 we remember you, as we are well intent to take care
 from by our best, to express our great desire to have
 it your well doing, where we were right glad by
 I last Report to understand as then we did, hoping
 well of our success in the future now you have in
 hand, it is good to see you with good and perfect health
 to be principally de liver. Promised always, you do
 not remain this our good blessing, in observing our
 tradition, care of you, to our King the King's health
 who may by this our Contrivance to you about your
 self, rather in favouring them at home, whom we
 not have any power to pay, but we are, for always their
 wide measure. And that we in this time, to this as
 I should have made in this, giving you of our most
 interest, how to go forth, and day by day, of your
 interest, I am sure, you will be able to do as our
 friend you have. Dated at our Court at Windsor
 the 11th of June 1677.

FACSIMILE OF A LETTER FROM LADY ANNE CLIFFORD, WHEN
 EIGHT YEARS OLD, TO HER FATHER, GEORGE, EARL OF
 CUMBERLAND, CONCERNING HER BIRTHDAY,
 WHICH WAS ON THE PREVIOUS DAY.



although towards the latter part of his life he made them much more loosely, irregular, gradually diminishing flourishes. Collectors need to know something of these peculiarities, because sometimes letters by Dickens and Thackeray and men of that kind are forged, and the forger has to be detected.

The study of forgeries is quite another subject. If I were to deal with the Ireland forgeries or the Chatterton forgeries, I should more than fill the space at my disposal. Autograph letters have been discovered in all kinds of curious places. There was a wonderful discovery of famous documents in a loft over a stable at Belvoir Castle. Some of the most important historical MSS. in England had been lost sight of, and were found in this place. Some wonderful documents were once found in a paper mill, whither they had been sent for destruction, and very often, in turning out family papers, bundles of letters have been discovered that had been quite overlooked, and which turned out to be of considerable value and high historical importance. Executors and others who have to wind up estates are bound to look very carefully through letters that are left behind, on the possible chance of there being something quite valuable amongst family papers. Sometimes it involves a great deal of work with very little results. I remember having to go through the papers of the lady for

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whom I was executor, and finding very little amongst hundreds of letters she had kept, but my search was eventually rewarded, and I was glad that I had waded through a mass of rubbish because later on I came upon some correspondence that was distinctly of importance.

CHAPTER XX

BLUE AND WHITE PORCELAIN

HARDLY anything is so decorative in a house as Chinese porcelain of blue and white, especially when placed against dark walls or oak furniture, and yet, oddly enough, it had not been collected in serious fashion in England until after the middle of the nineteenth century. A pioneer in this direction was a Frenchman named Bracquemond, who began to collect it in 1856. In 1862 he persuaded a certain Frenchwoman, a Madame Desoye, to open a little shop for the sale of blue and white porcelain and Oriental prints in the Rue de Rivoli, and Whistler, the famous artist, was one of the earliest purchasers at that shop. He introduced the love of blue china to Rossetti, and from these two artists, helped as they were to obtain fine examples by Murray Marks, the famous dealer, who was far in advance of his times in respect to the appreciation of blue porcelain, we owe the existence of a desire to collect such porcelain.

At first a great deal of it was wrongly dated. It was declared to be the production of the

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fifteenth century, instead of the seventeenth century, and even now there are many persons who, seeing the date mark upon Chinese porcelain that belongs to the period of about 1465 to 1487, believe that this date mark corresponds with the period at which the porcelain was made. The Chinese have always, however, been amazing people for counterfeiting, and thinking that the European customer would value their commodity for the same quality that made it so esteemed in China, dated it back a century or so.

Now we know better than the early collectors, and we understand that the beautiful vases decorated with the prunus blossom, generally called the hawthorn, although it really represents the bloom of the *meihua*, or winter-blooming plum-tree, belong to the reign of K'ang-Hsi (1662-1722) and not to that of Chia-Ching (1522-1566).

It is not, by the way, always recognised that the decoration of these so-called hawthorn ginger-jars conveyed a dainty allegory concerning the coming of spring. The blue which covered the surface of the jar represents the cracking of the ice, and the blossom is that which opens out as the ice begins to pass away, and spring is in view.

These beautiful jars were used for the conveyance of costly gifts of tea or other delicacies intended for the beginning of the New Year. The jar from the Huth collection, for which Mr. Huth is said to have given under a hundred



A SPLENDID BLUE AND WHITE GINGER JAR DECORATED
WITH THE PRUNUS BLOSSOM.



pounds, sold at his sale for £5,900, the record price of a jar of that kind. It was of course the very finest that had ever come into the market, although it has been stated by collectors that there are still two finer ones to be found in the possession of a Dutch family in Friesland, who imported them generations ago, and have preserved them ever since.

An almost equally beautiful jar came to the British Museum from the Salting collection, and another one, also in the same museum, was bought for a price under three hundred pounds, and, in the eyes of some connoisseurs, rivalled the superb example from the Huth collection. The Huth vase was at one time in the possession of Mr. Murray Marks, and several of the best of these jars, that are now in various great collections, passed through the hands of this eminent and well-known dealer.

He was responsible also for the name "Mussulman blue," or "Mahometan blue," and is said to have suggested, in conversation with Dr. Bushell, that having discovered that the original Chinese name of the blue indicated that its origin was outside China, this was the suitable word to apply to it, and collectors have adopted it accordingly.

There are numbers of hawthorn ginger-jars all over the country, and the majority of them are quite unimportant. They are in the windows

of various dealers in tea, and are often to be seen in ordinary houses. The Chinese soon found out what a demand there was for a jar of this particular colour, and they set to work to produce scores of them for the market. Still, there are chances for a collector, amongst all this variety, and the possessions of some of the early collectors have never yet come into the market, so that jars as fine as any of those in the museums may even yet be discovered.

The ginger-jars are not the only famous pieces of blue. There are tall vases in sets of three or five. There are the long-necked vases known as sprinklers. There are the plates which bear upon them designs representing tall and graceful Chinese ladies, which the Dutch traders called "Lange Lijsen," and which Whistler paraphrased into "Long Elizas"; and there are cups and saucers, pots and jars, and all kinds of other pieces that belong to quite good periods, and are beautiful in decoration.

The Dutch were the people who first of all introduced them into Europe, and long before the English or the French appreciated their beauty, Dutch merchants understood the charm of blue and coloured Oriental ware, and gave substantial prices for the finest pieces.

It is to the work of Dr. Bushell, who for nearly a quarter of a century was attached to the British Legation at Peking, that we owe the credit of

clearing up the subject of the dating of Chinese porcelain, and he was the first person who wrote about it with authority, and cleared away a great many of the errors which had hitherto surrounded its history. His book was undertaken at the request of that energetic collector, Mr. W. T. Walters of Baltimore, and it was responsible for readjusting the whole subject of blue and white porcelain, and of the coloured porcelain that was almost equally important, and in the eyes of some connoisseurs even more decorative.

The earliest piece of Oriental porcelain that we have in England can be seen in New College. It is a bowl of what is known as celadon green, and used to belong to Archbishop Warham (1504-1532). It is mounted in wonderful silver gilt work, and there are other mounted pieces to be seen in different English museums and country houses, although not quite so old or important as this. Chinese porcelain mounted in Elizabethan silver is of course exceedingly rare and very precious, and the aim of every great collector is to obtain a specimen of it.

The finest collection of blue and white porcelain that was ever brought together was that which belonged to Mr. Pierpont Morgan, and was sold after his death for £800,000 to Messrs. Duveen. It embraced the Marston-Perry and the Garland collections, and contained one superb vase,

decorated with the prunus blossom in red on a black ground, and at the time of its purchase the only example known of this particular design. The Garland collection had sold for £120,000, and Mr. Morgan had bought it all, and added it to what he already possessed. There are other great collections.

Lord Leverhulme has splendid pieces, both in London and at his museum ; there are magnificent pieces belonging to the Metropolitan Museum of New York, some of the finest of which came from the Altmann collection ; there were the Lee and the Bennett collections, that which belonged to Judge Gary ; and some very fine pieces, including many in what is called powder-blue, were once the property of Mr. G. L. Bevan, who happened to be an excellent judge of porcelains. The Salting collection added some splendid pieces to the possessions of the British nation, and at South Kensington, in Dresden, and in New York, this fascinating ware can be studied with great advantage, because in these museums are some of the best examples of it that exist in the world.

CHAPTER XXI

OLD DEEDS

IT has been a habit amongst lawyers in recent times that, when purchases are made of land, only the deeds that immediately concern the title are handed over, and early ones, unnecessary to quote in the abstract of the title, are considered as of small importance. They are sometimes retained in the lawyer's office for a while, and then sold, or are even discarded at the time. Such a course is exceedingly unsatisfactory from the point of view of the antiquary. There are some people who care nothing for the history of the land which they possess, and only desire that their possession of it should be secure, but there are many others keenly interested in everything that concerns the past story of land, and in the people who originally possessed it, and to them these deeds are of high importance.

The result of such a course has been that a number of parchments, from time to time, have come into the market, and moreover, large quantities of documents have been turned out of muniment rooms by persons who knew nothing

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of the value of the deeds they handled, and were quite unable to peruse them.

Collectors have added a new hobby, that of the acquisition of interesting and important deeds, and the price for such treasures has begun to mount to quite a substantial figure.

Deeds that have upon them the portrait of the Sovereign, with elaborate decorated borders, and with the seals appended therefrom, have a double interest. They are beautiful objects in themselves, and are generally also of some notable value from the standpoint of history. I know of one billiard-room splendidly decorated by a whole series of framed deeds which hang upon its walls, all beautifully written and elaborately illuminated, constituting a unique form of ornamentation.

Some collectors are only attracted by the seals, and for fine impressions of early Royal seals are prepared to pay substantial prices, whether the document to which the seal is attached is a notable one or not. Others collect deeds with signatures, and a document signed by Queen Elizabeth is always a precious thing. Her big, square, bold signature is very noticeable, and eminently characteristic of its writer.

Some landowners, having had their attention drawn to the early deeds they possess, have framed the documents, and have got an archivist to write a short account of each deed, to attach to the frame, and then have hung these deeds

in passages or corridors. In this way they have provided, not only a method of decoration, but have enabled the treasures that have borne the signatures of their ancestors and their Sovereigns to be appreciated by all who can see them.

All kinds of deeds have been turned out of record-rooms and lawyers' offices, and have come into the market. There have been Court Rolls, from various manors, which easily sell for from ten to twenty pounds apiece, and much smaller ones are of less value. They are full of information respecting the tenants of the manors. Marriage settlements have also been discarded, and when sealed and signed by important people are quite precious things. Old leases very often bear the autographs of historic personages. For example, I saw some a few days ago, signed by the Archbishops of Canterbury, Whitgift, Abbot, Laud, Juxon, Sheldon and Sancroft. Ancient charters often bear important seals, and the earlier they are in date, the more precious they are to a collector. A beautiful little charter of Henry III, with a delightfully sharp seal three inches long, sold for about ten pounds recently; a document of James II for a very similar amount.

Papal Bulls often occur amongst the family documents, and have been placed upon the market, and these are decorative objects, and generally give interesting information concerning religious difficulties in families, as, for example, marriages

contrary to canon law, owing to the relations of the two persons as regards consanguinity, or the masses to be said at particular altars in certain churches.

Quaker marriage settlements are attractive things, because often they bear very many signatures, and those connected with some of the early watchmakers of the eighteenth century are adorned at times by the signatures of royal personages and ambassadors of high importance, who were present on these occasions.

There have been several notable documents sold recently in America ; a highway grant under the Great Seal of Elizabeth sold for a very substantial sum, and a deed of exchange relating to certain property, which bore the signatures of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, and Sir Walter Mildmay, with the Queen's own signature, and possessing a splendid example of her first Great Seal, was a treasure for which there was considerable competition.

Deeds signed by Edward VI are unusually precious. It will be remembered that he came to the throne when he was only ten years old, and at first many of the Royal letters patent were signed by the entire Council of Regency, including Cranmer, the Duke of Somerset, the Lord High Admiral, Tunstall, Bishop of Durham, and others, and notable deeds not only bear the Great Seal, but also the King's Royal sign manual ; a docu-

ment signed in this way is worth about two hundred pounds, and it is very seldom that such a thing comes into the market.

Sometimes deeds contain maps of property which are ornamental, but which also may be of importance when the property changes hands, concerning its boundaries, and very often there are illuminated coats of arms upon ancient deeds, carefully prepared, and at times glowing with beautiful colour.

Sometimes, amongst the old parchments, there are family pedigrees, and these are always precious. There are collectors ready to purchase them, especially those who are connected in any degree, however remote, with the family whose pedigree has been prepared, and here, again, our American cousins take great interest in such matters, and are prepared to bid substantially for any ancient pedigrees. It is seldom advisable to turn boxes of deeds into the market until they have been very carefully examined, because even if they have no importance with regard to property which perchance has passed away from the family, there is antiquarian interest in such parchments, and very frequently an æsthetic charm in the membranes, quite apart from their archæological value. There are many country houses in England where there are still masses of old documents, some of the highest possible archæological importance, and yet I heard only within the last few

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months of ten boxes of old deeds, regarded as of
no value at all, being turned out of a country
house, and sold as waste paper at five shillings a
box. One tiny deed out of one of these boxes
belonged to the late thirteenth century, and was
sold almost immediately for £25—ten times the
amount that had been obtained for the whole lot
of boxes.

CHAPTER XXII

OLD ENGLISH IRONWORK

PREVIOUS to the time of Lady Dorothy Nevill few persons seem to have made a really careful study of the history of old English domestic ironwork. Lady Dorothy, whom I knew quite well, spent a considerable part of her life in Sussex, and she found the cottages in the villages round about her full of interesting pieces of ironwork, so she started making a collection. There were fire-dogs and fire-backs, rush-holders, tongs, candlesticks, hooks and chains for the suspension of large pots, and various other pieces of domestic work which were specially interesting, because many of them had been produced close to where she purchased them.

There was in early days a large iron-producing district in Sussex, near Heathfield. There were many furnaces, which at one time kept half the population in full employ, and many Sussex families owed their fortunes to these ironworks. Notably amongst these families Lady Dorothy refers to a family named Fuller.

Hammerponds still exist in many parts of Surrey and Sussex and give their names to villages,

e.g. Abinger Hammer, and they have in many instances clear streams full of trout flowing out of them. The ironworks continued in force down to 1825, the last furnace in Sussex, Ashburnham Furnace, having been blown out in that year, after having steadily been worked by Lord Ashburnham up to that time, and when this furnace was destroyed it was said that its iron was among the very best that had ever been produced in the world.

Sussex ironwork was very highly esteemed, and it is said that the railings surrounding St. Paul's Cathedral, part of which are still in existence, were of Sussex workmanship.

All kinds of things that later on were made of different materials were at one time produced in iron, so much so that there are even in some of the Sussex graveyards iron gravestones, or monuments as they ought more strictly to be called.

When Lady Dorothy began to collect she was told that what she was buying was "absolute rubbish"; she herself says so in one of her books, and I have often heard her say how much she was laughed at for collecting the local domestic implements. Presently, when she had got quite a good collection together, Sir Purdon Clarke pleaded that it might be transferred to the Victoria and Albert Museum, and there her collection still remains, and from the time that she began buying prices have gone up steadily. She concerned

herself mainly with the small pieces, but occasionally she bought larger ones; she had portions of balconies, iron lamp stands, one or two delightful gates, a very charming fender, a pendent lamp, and several other pieces that were quite attractive. Some of the collectors who have followed her, and who had more space at their command than she possessed, have bought even larger pieces of fine ironwork; for instance, one collector that I know has three splendid pairs of park gates, all of the most beautiful wrought foliage ironwork, the result of the ability of some amazingly clever craftsman.

There was an interesting exhibition of art metal work in May, 1898, which drew fresh attention to the importance of forging iron in artistic fashion, and which also was concerned with the carving and chasing of iron and steel, the manufacture of fine steel locks and keys, and embossing and beating brass and copper work. It attracted a great deal of attention, and on examination of the exhibits people could see that hardly any craft in the world can compete with the work of a good blacksmith. Alertness, touch and individuality are all fostered and are actually incorporated in the mind of a man who is to be a good metal-worker. The sturdy independence and resourcefulness of a smith are a delight to all who come into contact with him.

It is rather sad to compare modern metal work

with old work. Look, for example, on the handles that appear on various pieces of modern oak furniture. They are often of brass or bronze, which is out of place, and if they are of iron are merely mechanically produced things, instead of the hand-wrought drops, rings and handles which used to be made in earlier and simpler days. The same thing applies to larger pieces of decoration, and collectors who are fortunate enough to get together pieces of good English ironwork, however small they be, will find in them a charm, by reason of their simplicity and artistic merit, that is wholly lacking in a great deal of the mechanically produced modern work. In an East Anglian church there is a wonderful bracket which supports the cover of the font, and the local smith, whose work it was, has allowed his fancy to run riot in the beautiful foliage decoration he has given in this piece of ironwork.

Fortunately, greater attention has been given to preserving good specimens of ironwork within the last few years than was the case in earlier times. In Victorian days beautiful old houses were pulled down and the railings, balconies and fanlights over the doors were all destroyed. Nowadays the London County Council is exceedingly particular about any such destruction in London, and transfers to its museum in Kingsland Road such of the fine pieces of the ironwork as do not find their way to the London Museum. At

either of these museums the connoisseur will find a good deal to delight him in the way of wrought ironwork, and will rejoice in the effort that is now being made to preserve it, to show the modern craftsman what was done in other days.

Some of the pieces of domestic ironwork that collectors may find are a little puzzling at first glance. There is, for example, the pair of circles united by two crossbars on a stand, and surmounted by a ring, which is occasionally to be seen in old farm-houses, and which has a somewhat mysterious appearance. It was really a very simple thing, intended to receive clay pipes which had been smoked for a long time, and were then put into these two iron circles, and the piece of apparatus placed in the oven, surrounded by a wood fire, and the pipes, which were difficult in those days to obtain, were re-burned white as snow and brought out again for fresh use. I have seen these old pieces of iron brought into excellent service in the present day as door scrapers, and they are more picturesque than the ordinary scraper one can see on the doorstep of the modern house.

The rushlight holders were of various kinds ; some were quite small, to stand on a table, others had tall iron stems set in a block of wood, that they might be placed near to a chair by a reader's shoulder, so as to give him increased light. Some of them were altered, so that the handle part

formed a sort of candlestick, and as the small rushlight gave place to a rough form of tallow candle, so the holder was altered in order that the tallow candle might be placed in it.

Then there are the tinder boxes, which are often charming in their simple decoration, the rib on the top of the cover being easily made, and the one on the side of the box just suitable for the finger to hold it. The inside cover, with which the tinder was pressed, was often quite a pretty piece of metal work.

Some of the ring handles, intended for entrance doors, and some of the iron latches for side doors, were exceedingly well made, charming pieces of smith's work. The principal part of the latch, on which the thumb was pressed, was so cleverly arranged that the thumb fitted exactly into the cavity, and the curve had a pleasant effect, very different from the straight flat look of a modern latch.

Then, again, the wrought-iron snaps of the lattice windows were often prettily made. At one cottage I went into I found that the latches of each window differed, and the ends of some of them were turned so as to bear some sort of resemblance to a bird, while others depicted a kind of flower, and the two latches in the principal room were curled up at the ends so cleverly that they represented tiny squirrels in wrought iron-work.

All these were made by the smith of the village, who was just allowed his own time to work out his own ideas.

In the same house I was attracted by the beauty of what was called the "peel," a large shovel with a very long handle, which was used for bringing the loaves out of the old-fashioned brick oven. The shovel was not a solid piece, such as one would have had in a modern spade or shovel, it was perforated by a very pretty design, representing a Tudor rose, with foliage and seeds, and the handle, instead of being perfectly straight and ugly, was forked at the end, and each of the two forks curved into a very pretty spiral. The blacksmith who had made it saw no reason why, in making an object that was for regular domestic use, he should not exercise his own personal skill upon it, and the result was a very pleasing thing, so good of its kind that it was quite worthy of being put away in the museum.

Fire-dogs, of course, are sometimes cast and sometimes wrought. The wrought ones are generally very delightful, both in shape and in decoration. Some of the most beautiful things that were ever made by village blacksmiths were keys for cabinets, or for doors, or even the big keys that were used for churches. Sometimes they are perfectly simple bows, but even when that is the case they are sufficiently smooth not to injure the fingers. Sometimes the blacksmith

had his own sweet will, and I have seen charmingly wrought keys in which the initial letter of the family appeared, or in which there was a rough representation of a coronet, or of some object which formed a well-known part of the shield, as, for example, a lamb, a bird, or a kind of dragon, and in one important house the front and the back door keys were wonderful pieces of wrought ironwork, in which there was a bold attempt to represent the family arms in the bow of the key.

In Stuart times, locks and keys were regarded as suitable presents. Lady Anne Clifford, Countess of Dorset, Pembroke and Montgomery, kept a local smith in constant employ in making what were known as "stock locks"—great, solid rectangular locks, intended to protect the front doors of important houses, and provided each with its big, heavy key. Sometimes these locks were put into oak coverings, and sometimes they were just left in the natural wrought iron case, but in several instances, either on the keys or on the oak, she had her initials, "A. P." and the date, and then she made presents of these locks to those persons whom she desired to honour, and who were proud to have the fine wrought iron lock on their doors and to show that it was the gift of the great lady of the district, who was probably the landlord or the lady of the manor. There are several of these locks

still in existence. There is one at Rose Castle in Carlisle ; there are two or three in churches in Cumberland and Westmoreland, and several of the houses, including one charming residence called Colin Field, near Kendal, boast of the presence of one of these substantial and important locks.

One of the advantages of collecting ironwork is that many of the pieces can be brought into use. There is one house where, whenever I raise the knocker to announce my arrival, I covet the beautiful piece of English wrought ironwork that I see on the door.

There is another where the large handsome ring handles which issue from the mouth of some kind of mystic beast are equally delightful, and in a third there are three or four pairs of wrought iron tongs in the fire-place that are, every one of them, well worth examination. The largest would lift quite a big log, and its legs are curved so as to hold an awkward-shaped piece of wood, and it is finished in wonderful fashion with a strange dragon with a curly tail ornamenting each of its handles. The smallest of all, which was probably a pipe-lighter, and with which no doubt some small Sussex farmer picked up a piece of coal to light the tobacco in his pipe, is as dainty a bit of ironwork as one could wish to see. The two pieces to hold the lighted coal are two ivy leaves, cleverly wrought, veined and stemmed, very

much like the actual leaf ; but the smith never makes the mistake of preparing an actual copy, of forcing his ironwork to look exactly like the natural object he has before him. It resembles it ; you can realise what was the *motif* for the work, but you do not find a scrupulous and absurd copy, but just a general and very charming effect. The intermediate pair of tongs has two strange hands, like the hands of some curious, angry monster, at its ends, with which the piece of coal is clasped, and there is a rough representation of a head in the middle where the legs of the tongs come together, and then of two more much smaller hands, which come out and form the handles of the tongs. The whole effect is curious and mysterious, but in taking hold of the piece of ironwork one realises how much of the spirit of the smith has gone into its manufacture, and how he delighted to produce something unusual and curious, and something that would show who had been the craftsman who had wrought it. For the same family a remarkable old box was made in the village for holding papers, and there again, the bands which clasped it are wrought into representations of the family crest, and the handles resemble stumps of a tree with foliage on them, very cleverly wrought, and very pleasing in effect.

Even those persons who are unable to collect ironwork would do well to look at it and to

appreciate the charm of it, for, in the present days of rapid and mechanical production, there is hardly any good smith-work being made, and then only for the occasional few who admire it, and who are in a position to commission its execution. May one recall the delightful lines of Morris in "Sigurd the Volsung":

" The hammer and fashioning iron
And the living coal of fire,
And the craft that createth a semblance
And fails of the heart's desire.
And the toil that each dawning quickens,
And the task that is never done,
And the heart that longeth ever,
Nor will look to the deed that is won."

CHAPTER XXIII

COLOUR PRINTS

IN an old house, in a low room, and especially in one looking on to an old-fashioned garden, there is hardly anything that can form a more pleasing decoration than a collection of old prints. I remember being particularly attracted by such a collection in a house in Scotland, and remarking with some satisfaction that the walls of the room were covered with a rather prettily patterned Old English chintz, and that on it the colour prints, in black and gold frames, produced a delightfully gay effect. I have heard it said that the prices given for colour prints are altogether ridiculous when compared with those given for drawings or paintings, because the print is a purely mechanical affair ; but I am afraid that the persons who make that remark are not always aware of the enormous amount of trouble and pains necessary to produce a colour print, and of the fact that all the detail concerning its production has to be repeated afresh for every impression that is taken. The printer of a colour print has to be somewhat of an artist. He has to know exactly how to wipe his coloured ink, not

into the lines or dots as if he were preparing for monochrome, but *out* of them, and he has to experiment with brush or stump when, very neatly and very accurately, he inks in many of the smaller details, keeping the outline quite clear and, at the same time, rubbing the colour into the engraving, so as to fill up the line or stipple completely. Flesh tints he has to build up, painting them into the plate, adjusting, blending, toning, and all this needs that gift of care and precision which comes of constant exercise. It is almost equivalent to painting up the copper-plate, and the greatest attention is needed in keeping the colours moist and warm, moving the plate backwards and forwards, dusting on dry colour, heightening complexion, and then in printing his beautiful impression, and, as I have just said, doing every part of this detail each time for every impression. Hence comes the value of really fine, brilliant impressions of colour prints.

In 1898, some foreign ladies pressed into my hands a series of colour prints as an acknowledgment for an act of courtesy they thought I had done for them. I endeavoured to explain to them that the prints were very precious and, as they included an absolutely brilliant impression of Condé's portrait of Mrs. Fitzherbert after Cosway, with margins all complete and in pristine condition—a print worth now at least four

hundred pounds—I had justification for my statement. I accepted one small print and returned all the large ones, but I had failed to make the donors aware of their value, and the fate of the Fitzherbert was very melancholy for, cut, trimmed and framed, it passed into the possession of a person who had no appreciation of it, and the others, I fear, shared a similar fate.

To a great extent we owe the art of colour printing to the skill of a man whose story is a sad one—W. W. Ryland, who brought the method of colour printing from France. He was exceedingly skilful and ambitious and, in conjunction with Angelica Kauffmann, made the colour print a very popular thing in the eighteenth century, creating a great impression in favour of Angelica by reason of the exquisite prints he made from her drawings. He came, however, of a strangely unlucky family; his brother was a dissolute spendthrift who, for highway robbery, was sentenced to death, and Ryland himself was first successful and then extravagant, after a while in serious difficulties, while later on he attempted suicide, and eventually, for forgery, was sentenced to death.

His pupil, Bartolozzi, carried on, with ever-increasing success, the fashion of the colour print. Certainly many of Bartolozzi's best works were produced in those beautiful browns and reds for

which his period was notable, but others of his works were depicted in more colours than one, and he was surrounded by a group of men such as Burke, Collyer, Condé, Knight, Jones, Hogg, Gaugain, Nutter, Schiavonetti, J. R. Smith, Tompkins, Turner and Ward, who were all masters of this beautiful art, and whose works now, if in fine condition, fetch very high prices.

Mark, please, the words "fine condition." Everything depends, in a colour print, upon its condition, its colour, its margin. Note also that, strictly speaking, there are no such things as "proofs" in colour prints. It seems to be almost certain that the earliest impressions taken from a plate (and these may be called proofs) were in monochrome, and some were on India paper, but this was in order to get the plate into condition, and to get the artist accustomed to it, as it is said that the plate itself was distinctly improved for colour purposes by taking off the early proofs; the sharpness and hardness were toned down, but the delicacy remained, and then came the colour, delicate, soft and charming; but the plate—as men knew nothing in those days of facing it—soon became worn, and it is only the fine early impressions that are things of such extraordinary beauty. After a while the plate shows clear signs of wear, and the later impressions are by no means satisfactory, and then very often the plate was re-bitten, or re-engraved, and constantly the later

prints are crude, quickly printed and unsatisfactory. Therefore let the collector use discretion in buying, and let not every person who owns colour prints jump to the conclusion that theirs are the specially fine ones for which connoisseurs seek.

Some of Condé's impressions, a few months ago, fetched between thirty and forty pounds apiece. Mrs. Fitzherbert after Cosway realised £38. Horace Beckford and Mrs. Jackson very nearly the same. Ward's "Sallad Girl" after Hoppner, a fine impression of which is a rare thing, fetched £130. Smith's "Feeding the Pigs" after Morland, £40; a pair of prints by Paye (another able painter), £30, and so on. These prices were, however, considerably exceeded when a wonderful collection of colour prints, got together by the late Sir Edward Coates, came into the market. It included one or two of the very rare ones, such as Northcote's "Young Lady and Comedian," Ward's "Selling Rabbits," "Rustic Felicity" and others, with works by Angelica, and engravings after paintings by Bunbury, Paye, Wheatley and Morland.

Occasionally Bartolozzi's engravings are found not printed on paper at all, but on satin, and Sir Edward Coates had a few of these. They are very rare and precious, but unluckily the plates from which many of them are printed are still in existence, as are also, I am sorry to say, Condé's

plate for Mrs. Fitzherbert and several more, with the result that newly produced impressions from these plates are on the market and, of the little Bartolozzi's, even some modern ones are printed on satin, with intent to deceive the unwary. If one could but touch the satin prints detection is certain, because the old satin was all of silk and far richer and softer in quality than the modern, which has an admixture of wool or cotton. The surface of old satin is, moreover, much more creamy than is the hard white of the modern satin.

Occasionally it is very difficult to detect some of these modern impressions. I nearly purchased in Florence an exceedingly good forgery. It seemed to me impossible that it could be modern, but when I found a strange reluctance on the part of the dealer to take it out of its frame for me to examine the paper it was printed upon, I began to hesitate, and when at last, yielding to persuasion, he did take it out, the watermark revealed a modern paper, and even without the sight of the watermark, one's own finger, testing the feel of the paper, made one convinced that it was a reproduction.

I have, however, seen two modern prints printed on fine *old* paper. Where the forger gets such paper I cannot tell, possibly from some scrap-book, but the paper was quite genuine, and it was only by the aid of a glass that one saw

the signs of re-touching on the plate, and of re-stippling in one particular part of it, and so gathered that the plate was the old one that had been touched up after wear, and that the print was comparatively worthless.

Stipple engraving was carried out on an etching ground on a copperplate, the outline was all laid in by means of small dots, made with a dry point, and then the darker parts etched in dots, larger and closer together. After the work had been bitten in, the lighter parts are laid in with a stipple graver, an ordinary engraving tool, held in a different fashion. By stipple work, the strokes of chalk or crayon can be imitated when the irregular dots are carefully and cleverly arranged.

A great charm about colour printing consists in the fact that, mechanical though one is bound to call the process, the necessity of which I have already spoken for painting in for each plate, gives a variety between different impressions. Sometimes also the paper takes a different hue under the colour; it sometimes absorbs more colour than at other times; occasionally the flesh work is not even, by reason of certain absorbent patches in the paper; or the print may have been taken off when the paint was hard and settled; or there may be a chemical change, and the red may have become browner and not as fresh and vivid as in other impressions; and so the connoisseur likes to select his

choice impressions, to weed out his collection from time to time, when he finds a finer impression of one he already has, and eventually, as in the case of the late Sir Edward Coates, to have a collection of which almost every print has been carefully selected by a competent judge, and is as good as time and money can produce. The delightfully bright, cheerful look of Sir Edward's rooms in Queen Anne's Lodge is not likely to be forgotten by those who had seen them, and all collectors of colour prints regret that, through the death of this collector and the dispersal of his fine collection, a series of almost unequalled beauty will be scattered far and wide.

Colour prints are of various sizes ; there are some exceedingly choice ones, very precious and valuable, no larger than miniatures—in fact, some of them represent miniatures—and there are others that are foolscap size, and even larger than that. They are often to be found with print-sellers, and in other shops, but the advice of a discreet judge is desirable in purchasing them, as the market is flooded with imitations, for the fine, choice impressions fetch hundreds of pounds, although most of them, when first produced, were sold at prices varying from ten shillings up to two guineas apiece.

CHAPTER XXIV

TRADERS' TOKENS

MOST collections of coins, however small, contain some few examples of the two series of tokens known as those of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.

We do not quite understand, in the present day, what it was to have a scarcity of copper coinage. There was a prejudice against the issue of coins in any baser metal than silver, and sovereigns, down to Stuart times, objected to such issue. It is true that Elizabeth issued some patterns for a legal coinage in copper, but the matter went no further, and no current coins were ever issued by that great Queen in baser metals. She did grant permission to the City of Bristol to strike some tokens to be current in that city and ten miles round, and this was towards the close of the sixteenth century, and these very rough Elizabethan tokens with C.B. on the obverse (*Civitas Bristol*) are occasionally to be found.

The Commonwealth Government contemplated a copper coinage, and struck patterns, both in copper and pewter, but no authorised issue ever

took place, and it was not until 1613 that a copper farthing appeared, when a patent was given to Lord Harington of Exton for the issue of copper tokens of that denomination. These Harington farthings, however, were hated by the people, they were so thin and poor, and of such small intrinsic value.

Meantime, it was very difficult to purchase small things. There was hardly any small currency, and the silver coin became more and more minute in size, and therefore more and more inconvenient, so, in the seventeenth century, the people took the matter into their own hands, rejected the Harington farthings, and struck local tokens for themselves, each little town or village having persons in it who issued their own token, and the traders had to keep boxes with divisions in them, into which to sort these little tokens. They passed from hand to hand freely, where the issuers were known or the respective corporations were accepted, and then they were put down by Act of Parliament in 1672, and the order was more or less obeyed, although Chester and Norwich issued these tokens till 1674, and they were issued in Ireland until 1679.

The other series, a hundred years later, came into force for much the same reason—scarcity of copper coinage and strenuous objection to the poor coinage that was current. This latter series comprised larger pieces, the tokens are about the

size of a halfpenny, whereas the seventeenth century ones were much smaller, the halfpenny being about the size of our farthing, and the farthing smaller still. The eighteenth century tokens only lasted for a few years, the Anglesey Mines halfpenny being the first that was struck, and that was followed by many others, some of them quite beautiful in their devices and designs, some issued by corporations and some by private individuals, and the latter formed advertisements which passed readily from hand to hand.

The seventeenth century ones are, however, the more important from the historical point of view, and many of them were issued. There was a book written all about them by William Boyne, in 1859, and it fell to my lot, some thirty years later, to issue a new edition, with the assistance of collectors all over England, and to very considerably more than double its original size, describing in all thirteen thousand tokens. I can claim, therefore, to have some interest in these little coins. They were not always circular ; some of them are heart-shaped, diamond-shaped, octagonal, or square, these, of course, being the rarer pieces ; and, of the circular pieces, the half-pennies, as a rule, are more scarce than the farthings. Several of them bear interesting references to local trades—lace appearing on Buckinghamshire tokens, and wool on those of Surrey ; gloves in Leicester and needles in Chichester

lace at St. Neot's and the curious yellowish bands or stocks appear on the Sherborne tokens, the place where they were made ; while a particular kind of fine serge, called " bay " or " say," is alluded to on the Colchester tokens. On the tokens of Ashburton we get the teazle, an allusion to the process of preparing the cloth carried on in that district and to the cultivation of the teazle plant.

Armorial bearings are on many of the tokens, and it is curious that, amongst the Cornish tokens, more than a fourth have armorial bearings, showing the extent to which the old Cornish families engaged in local commerce. The arms of all the trading companies are to be found, as well as those of lesser-known companies, such as the Merchants of the Staple, the Merchants Adventurers, the Tollmen, of Stilton and Doncaster, the Shearmen, and many others. Local officials are commemorated on them ; sometimes it is the Portreeve, the Mayor, the Swordbearer, the Bailiffs, the High Bailiff, the Constable, the Overseers, or the Aldermen ; and on many of the tokens appear statements showing their original purpose. " For the Poor," " For the Poor's Advantage," " The Poor's Halfpenny," " Remember the Poor," " Change and Charity," " To be Changed for the Poor," or even, in rhyming form :

" When you please
I'll change these."

In many cases, the issuer joined to his initials the initial of his wife. In some cases, if he had been married twice, he put both wives' initials. In frequent instances, he gave the sign under which his shop was known, or some representation of his trade—a butcher having a knife and chopper, a tallow chandler a candle; other people rolls of bread, flowers, bottles, woolpacks, men making candles, and similar emblems.

We get a good deal of information about the inns of the time from these tokens, and their names, especially those of London; the "Boar's Head" at Eastcheap, for instance, a house referred to by Shakespeare, and the "Devil and Dunstan" at Temple Bar, and the "Cock" in Fleet Street; while some of the country posting-houses mentioned on them are even now important houses of call, as, for instance, the "Anchor" at Liphook, the "Fountain" at Portsmouth, the "White Hart" at Harford Bridge, and the "Phoenix" at Harley Row.

This issue of these small tokens soon drove out of existence the thin, breakable Harington regal farthings, which only weighed six grains apiece, and, although quite a large fortune was made by the Harington family out of the patent granted in 1613, yet the Haringtons were execrated by the people for forcing the coins upon them. The issuers of these tokens were often important people in the districts; the Howells were notable

people in Lynn; the Owners were the people who established a children's hospital in Yarmouth, and members of the same family opposed ship money. One Brighton issuer was the original tenant of the old Ship Inn, and another married the captain of the vessel in which King Charles escaped from England; while an issuer named Treagle, at Taunton, was one of the earliest booksellers in Somerset, and the man who issued a Civil War publication called "Man's Wrath and God's Praise." One issuer at Kendal was the inventor of a green woollen material called "Kendal green," which both Shakespeare and Dryden refer to. A bookseller in Marlborough called Hammond issued his token with a book upon it, and there is a touching reference in the town records to him: "The Royalists took Marlborough in 1642, and for 3 hours fed a fire with Hammond's books," and poor Hammond himself has left a record in his own handwriting: "I have but little left; I have saved not above eight pounds' worth of all my goods and books; my children are crying to go home, and I tell them we have no home to go to. God help me, what am I to do?" I wonder why it is, by the way, that not a single token-issuer in Wells (and there were many of them), put his wife's initials on the token. Were all the leading traders in that city bachelors?

The eighteenth century tokens are easier to

collect ; they are much more often to be found, and to the general public they are more attractive, because of their size and their decorative value. Many of them commemorate historic events, or events of local importance, the establishment of a great bookseller's shop in the place, the success of a shipping adventure, the encouragement of a young man who showed great genius in Birmingham, the foundation of a hospital in 1728, the establishment of a new distillery, the work of a new die engraver or medallist, the advertisement of a man who called himself a posture master, of another who was noted for cheap haberdashery and tailor's trimmings, of one who issued a Court Gazette, and of another who recommended some special lozenges which he had invented, girls making lace, men making fishing rods, people drinking coffee at a newly established coffee-house, the sale of tea at a price lower than most people had bought it before, the picking of hops, the soling of boots, the boring of wells, the making of windlasses and cog-wheels and ropes, and string, and windmills, the existence of important old castles, such as those at Kendal, Bolton, Guildford and Bowes ; Abbey Churches at Bath, Coventry, Crewkerne are also commemorated, and the mining industry is referred to frequently. The standard book about them is that written by Batty, which describes about fifteen thousand.

There are no very great prizes to be obtained in either series, the tokens of unusual shape in the seventeenth century, and those issued in the northern counties being rarer than others, whilst there is always a demand amongst collectors for really fine sharp specimens of the eighteenth century, but they are comparatively easy things to obtain, and interesting to collect, and there is a great deal of historic information to be gleaned from them.

CHAPTER XXV

LACE BOBBINS

AMONGST the curious things that people are now collecting are the bobbins used in lace-making, in the counties of Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Devonshire. There is no particular art concerned in a collection of this kind, but a great deal of pleasure may be taken in gathering together lace bobbins, arranging them in groups, and exhibiting them in cases, and when a substantial collection is made, one is almost sure to find a market for it. The better the collection is, the better grouped and arranged, the higher the price to be obtained. There is also the amusement of trying to decipher the inscriptions upon the bobbins, and some pleasure in admiring the dexterity with which they were made, besides the joy of being able to get hold of bobbins entirely different from any that have been seen before, and the satisfaction of finding some dated or named, or with special historic interest.

Bobbins are made of all sorts of material, from gold and silver down to wood, bone, brass, ivory and pewter. The majority, of course, are of wood,

and then, as has been pointed out by the leading writer on the subject, Mr. Wright, there are all varieties of wood, boxwood, ebony, maple, cherry, etc. Sometimes the wooden ones are decorated with little bits of metal, sometimes in the hollows of them there are smaller tiny bobbins, or beads, or shots. Occasionally they are dated, generally early in the nineteenth century, and sometimes they have names upon them.

Amongst bone and metal bobbins there is great variety, and the utmost ingenuity was applied in making these quaint little objects. They were often used in connection with rustic courtships, and were gifts to the favoured maid, that she might use them on her lace cushion, and think of the donor, and in that case, they have delightful inscriptions upon them, somewhat resembling the little mottoes that used to be found in old-fashioned crackers. Perhaps some of them were actually the means of courting, and they bear such statements as "Let me have the wedding-day, my dear," "Sweet love, be mine," "Meet me by moonlight alone," "Love, when will you marry me?" and so on. In others, perhaps, the statement is not quite so definite. "I long to see my love once more," "I had a mother once like you," "Love me for ever," "Hearts united must live contented," and occasionally, perhaps, a bobbin is returned, on which the girl herself has made some sort of reply,

as bobbins have been found bearing such inscriptions as "Kiss me quick, and don't be shy," "Love me till the day I die," "I love you," or the simple words, "Fancy me," or, still shorter, the single word "Yes," and these love-making bobbins form quite a pretty collection by themselves.

There are the series that Mr. Wright calls "puzzle bobbins," on which the inscriptions are in a sort of cipher, not easy to determine, or in which verses of Scripture are quoted, which appear to have a double meaning, and give the information from a shy lover that was intended. Those that have names upon them are of great interest, because, in some cases, the descendants of the persons who marked their names on old bobbins, can be found still pursuing the picturesque occupation that their grandparents pursued in earlier days, and quite interesting little groups might be made with bobbins that have the names of lace-making villages upon them. There are several, for instance, that are marked as belonging to Olney in Buckinghamshire, others to Cranfield in Bedfordshire, and yet others to places in Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire, where lace-making has been carried on for many a long day, and is still pursued.

Another group may be made of bobbins which relate to important national events, as, for instance, those which commemorate the corona-

tion of Queen Victoria, the various troubles in the Crimea, the Battle of Waterloo, and local events, such as local murders, trials, executions, elections and transportations. Sometimes the bobbins contain quite long inscriptions, generally from the Bible, because the lacemakers were a religious people, and well acquainted with Scripture, and one also finds quotations from hymns or popular songs. Little bits of the songs that were sung while people were making their lace appear upon these bobbins, and sometimes some humorous comic statements.

Then there are the bobbins that are to be found in sets, which are very rare. There is a set in the possession of one of the lacemakers which commemorates the birth of her grandmother and her great-aunts, each being marked with the name of one particular child, and the date of birth. Another set of three commemorates the birth of a set of triplets, and the name of each child appears on the set of bobbins. In another museum there is a set of twelve bobbins each of which is inscribed with a portion of the Lord's Prayer. The alphabet and long lists of numerals are to be found, and occasionally information that they were intended as presents to particular persons, or names of special people connected with the village where they are made, or with the district, such for example as Wesley, Bunyan, or Nelson.

They may be grouped according to the beads which form part of their decoration, and sometimes these beads are of considerable beauty; some little bits of Bristol glass are to be found on one bobbin, another is adorned with some beautiful Egyptian mummy beads, which must have been brought home by some explorer, others, perhaps the gift of a sailor, are adorned with some seeds, generally of a bright colour, and from such distant places as Patagonia, New Guinea, Southern Australia. Then there are the quaint patterns that are peculiar to a certain district. Little floral emblems that are favoured by the lacemakers, and one of the great aims of the collector is to get what is called a series of bobbins, that is to say, a set of twelve, often were carved in similar fashion, in order to be kept together by the lacemaker whose good fortune it was to receive them. The whole set used in Devonshire on a lace pillow was about twenty-four, but there has never yet been a set of twenty-four bobbins discovered alike, or even resembling one another, and it is probable that the ingenious person would find his patience overpowered by the effort of making so many. Sometimes, in a village, may be found an old woman who has been a beauty in her day, and she may possess a series of bobbins given her by the boys who paid her attention in the days gone past. One writer refers to

such a person, and the bobbin she prized most read :

“ When this you see, remember me,
And bear me in your mind,
For all the world is naught to me
So long as you are kind.”

History is very much made up of little side-lights which give, in indirect fashion, information about the people of a village, and in gathering up this information collectors of bobbins are doing good service, because these inscribed bobbins will disappear, people will buy their bobbins from the manufacturer, or from his agent, and the old idea of carving them in the place will pass away. Local museums are therefore glad to obtain collections of bobbins that were used in the district, and to find on the bobbins little scraps of information about the patterns used in the lace itself and the lacemaker.

To the tourist the collection of bobbins will be found an interesting hobby. He will not be able to purchase all those that he covets, but a little strategy may be practised, and often a lacemaker is glad to exchange some bobbins for a coin of the realm.

The collector should be advised to note carefully the name of the place where the bobbin was obtained, and he will find that there are characteristics to be found on different bobbins, that have come from a particular part of the country.

Hardly any two bobbins can be found alike. Moreover, there is comparatively little forgery in these dainty objects, and the forgeries can generally be detected by the mechanical manner in which they are turned out.

CHAPTER XXVI

AMBER

AMBER is one of the most beautiful of all natural objects; its glowing golden colour, its exquisite, smooth, silky texture, are alike remarkable. There is a great lump of it in the window of a tobacconist in the Burlington Arcade, which always fascinates me as I pass by, but those who only know amber in its two distinctive shades of yellow, clear and dull, have little appreciation of the glory of the colour of the amber that can be found in Sicily, sometimes of superb red colour, occasionally blue, and often opalescent and fluorescent, with wonderful shades of green and yellow and pink.

“What is that curious brooch you have on?” I said to a lady who once called upon me, and she replied that unfortunately it was only a piece of bright coloured paste she had found amongst her grandmother’s things.

I begged her to let me see it, and tore up some minute pieces of tissue paper, and then, rubbing her brooch on the sleeve of my coat, proved to her at once that she had a piece of fine Sicilian amber in her possession, of precious quality, for

all the tiny morsels of tissue paper clung to it, jumping up to meet it as I held it towards them.

"You have surely a very curious ornament to your hand-bag?" was the remark that I made on another occasion, noticing a pendent blob of yellow hanging to a very pretty satin bag.

Again the owner knew nothing about it, and it was an exquisite piece of amber, enshrining a fine green beetle of a sort of diamond back variety, and that lump of amber now adorns the owner's neck, suspended from a gold chain. It turned out afterwards that the hand-bag had been made by a person who had stolen various ornaments at an earlier period of her career, without much knowledge of their value, and had used them to decorate the hand-bags she sold.

Occasionally there are carved pieces of amber to be found, and I have seen a more or less complete set of chessmen carved in amber.

In a country house in England there is a magnificent chess-board, mounted in silver, in which the chequers are of amber of different shades of colour. It originally belonged to one of the early Stuart monarchs, and is an amazingly fine thing.

I once missed purchasing an amber casket; the price seemed high, but was not really so; when I returned to the shop, someone else had carried off the treasure. There are many people nowadays wearing amber beads, and for a while the most popular form of amber seems to be the dull,

cloudy yellow, but the more beautiful amber is the deep, clear, almost transparent orange-coloured amber, and in many instances these remarkable pieces of fossil resin enshrine beautifully preserved insects, leaves, even fruits and flowers, hair and feathers, which became enveloped in the mysterious ages of the past, when the amber was fluid.

One of the reasons why amber is used by smokers is because the Turks always said it was quite incapable of transmitting any infection, it can be cleansed in a minute, and as when they desire to pay a guest particular honour they transfer the mouthpiece of the pipe from the host's mouth to that of the guest, it was desirable that something should be used about which there was no fear of infection.

In buying pieces of amber or amber ornaments, the collector should be careful that he does not obtain either artificial amber, which has no electrical power at all, or what is sometimes called ambroid, really composed of small bits of amber, softened and pressed together. This pressed amber has a certain amount of electrical power, but it can always be detected through the microscope, as the effect of it under polarised light is entirely different to that which appears when actual amber is examined.

In the days of the Renaissance amber was in very great demand, and was highly regarded on

account of its beauty. In the museums of Florence can be seen several splendid amber cups and caskets ; there are fine ones also in Spain, but I have seen several good examples in the hands of London and provincial dealers, sometimes with carved figures at the corners of the caskets, sometimes associated with carved ivory panels, not often in fine condition, but always delightful in colour and charm.

The best of yellow amber comes from Königsberg, and is fished up from the Baltic Sea, but the most glorious of amber is that which is found in Sicily, especially near to Catania.

Very few things are more beautiful than the exquisite bits of amber that are made up into necklaces, ear-rings and pendent jewels, and are amongst the great treasures of the Sicilian people.

Even in Italy, the material is not always recognised. In the largest collection that has ever been formed of Italian jewellery, I discovered a necklace with three pieces of beautiful Sicilian rosy amber, of the exquisite red that can be seen at the time of a sunset.

The owner, an able expert, was sure that the material was only composition, but again, the electric power that amber acquires by friction proved that my surmise was a correct one—that, set in this piece of Sicilian jewellery, were three as lovely bits of Catanian amber as I had ever seen.

The student of natural history is sure to be interested in amber, and one of the curious things about the treasures that are found inside amber is that we have no remains of any mammal, except certain tufts of hair.

Nor is there anything which relates to the creatures which lived in the water, but insects that would find their homes in trees are frequently to be seen, such as spiders, ants and flies, while the existence of some portions of feathers reveals to us the presence of birds in the old amber forests.

There is certainly in Munich part of the remains of a lizard to be seen in a lump of amber, and in Berlin there is what is stated to be a portion of a fish, but it is almost certain that both of these things have been introduced artificially, because amber can be softened with hot oil, and by means of some pressure two broken pieces of amber can be brought together.

The leaves that are to be found in amber almost all belong to pine trees, but there are also representatives of such trees as the oak and the willow, the beech and the poplar to be found, as well as some leaves that have not hitherto been identified as belonging to any existing tree.

Moreover, both the leaves and the blossom of the camphor tree have been found in German amber, showing that this tree, which now we only find in the East, in what are called Tertiary

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times, must have been growing in Northern Europe.

The Chinese were fond of amber, and there are several interesting buttons for Chinese robes to be found in that material, sometimes beautifully carved, representing strange monsters or curious figures.

The Japanese also were attracted by the beauty of the same material, and very often, amongst Japanese things, pieces of amber can be found.

Then, the stoppers of snuff bottles are often of amber, and the pendant ornaments from the long chains of beads that Chinese mandarins wear are sometimes of amber, and are worth searching for.

A collection of pieces of amber can be of great beauty, and as amber can be found almost all over the world, various different kinds can be gathered up.

For example, Rumanian amber is often wonderfully flecked with points of colour, resembling gold and silver, and there are some beautiful examples of it in the museum at Bukarest. From very remote times it has been a delight to the eye.

There is a fine cup of amber in the Brighton Museum, which came from a barrow discovered in Sussex. Bits of amber are found in Anglo-Saxon graves, even in prehistoric caves, and amber has been dug up at Cromer, Felixstowe, Aldeburgh, and other places.

In Russia, in one of the Emperor's palaces, was a room decorated with amber and containing beautiful works in that material. It is many years since I saw it. I wonder what has become of it? Collectors who are in search of a new hobby may well be recommended to take up the study of amber, and they will find a great joy in it.

It is also worth while to read up what has been written about amber, concerning the old ideas that it was useful as an amulet, that it had medicinal properties, that it was hung around the neck, that it was used even in cookery, and then the student may be advised to look up the kindred subject of ambergris and find out how often confusion has arisen between the two entirely different materials having no resemblance to one another, save in name.

CHAPTER XXVII

PORTRAITS IN ENAMEL

I WAS surprised some time ago when inspecting the collection of miniatures belonging to a friend, to find that he did not realise the importance and artistic merit of miniatures painted in enamel, nor was he able to distinguish between ordinary miniatures and enamel portraits. He was guarding from the sun's rays some enamel portraits which no power on earth could have faded, and he had put aside some other enamels on the ground that they were purely mechanical things, unworthy of being in his collection.

An enamel portrait is just as much a piece of careful painting as is an ordinary miniature, and in some respects it requires more skill to paint it than it does to paint on ivory or paper. The colours used are composed of finely powdered enamel and they change in the furnace, so that what is put on with the brush as brown may, perhaps, when vitrified by the heat of the furnace, turn to red, and what appears to be grey may come out an exceedingly brilliant blue. The painter, therefore, in painting an enamel on a

piece of copper or gold, as the case may be, has to bear in mind what are the actual colours he is using, although, when he does use them, they do not resemble those colours; and he must also be prepared for the fact that when, under the influence of heat, his colours become fluid, a degree or two too much of heat may entirely ruin all his work, or one colour may run over the others and so the whole portrait be spoilt. He has not only to paint with the greatest care, but he has to watch the object while in its little furnace and withdraw it at exactly the right moment. The result, if well carried out, is an absolutely permanent portrait, and it may be an object of the greatest possible beauty.

There were many artists who worked in enamel. Only a few weeks ago I saw a very large collection of enamel portraits which had taken nearly a lifetime to prepare and which will, I suppose, eventually come into the market. It embraced portraits by all the notable enamellers.

Of these enamellers perhaps the greatest were the Genevan artist, Petitot, and his son (who had the same name), and their partner, Jacques Bordier. Miniatures by Petitot are very highly prized and are works of extraordinary beauty. Some of the very finest Petitot ever executed were sold a few weeks

ago at the Burdett-Coutts sale, and fetched high prices. One of them, representing Charles II, realised 420 guineas; one of Charles I, 290 guineas; and one of the Duchess of Orleans, 340 guineas, with others in very similar ratio. The marvel of Petitot's work is its extreme minuteness. Both the Petitots must have possessed almost miraculous skill in craftsmanship, because every line of the full wigs worn in their time and every detail of the features is wrought with extreme delicacy and charm, and the miniature was vitrified with marvellous skill so that every colour has burned to exactly the right shade, and there is not the smallest sign of any overrunning or spoiling. Petitot's works have always been very highly esteemed. The portrait of the Duchess of Orleans just mentioned, belonged to a Swedish enameller called Zincke, who kept it as his model and who tried his hardest to equal it. He sold it to Horace Walpole, and at Walpole's sale Lady Burdett-Coutts bought it. Zincke's work is very well known. He came over to England in 1706 and painted an enormous number of small portraits, and it is said that his portraits had to be fused four or five times before perfection was obtained; but some of Petitot's went into the furnace as much as ten times to obtain perfect results.

Boit was another Swede who worked in England

in Queen Anne's time, and who produced some big enamels. Zincke's work one knows by the brilliance of the blue he used in the draperies, or by the red that he often used on men's coats. Some of his finest miniatures are very precious things. One of the very best I have seen for a long time, signed and dated, was bought in a jeweller's shop in Cornwall for a very few shillings, and had ornamented the back of a fine watch. It now adorns a notable collection, and I believe the owner gave some two hundred or two hundred and fifty pounds for what the dealer picked up for a few shillings.

There were a few portraits made in Battersea enamel, but these are not very satisfactory, nor are they attractive. In the latter part of the eighteenth century there was a clever Norfolk enameller, called Spicer, and then there were two or three other eighteenth century enamellers who ought to be mentioned, as, for instance, Hone, Spencer and Meyer. Spencer, by the way, began life as a footman, but developed an extraordinary talent for painting, and his master sent him to a school of design and helped him to set up as an artist. His portraits are small—about the size of a halfpenny.

One of the joys of collecting enamels consists in the fact that the portrait is permanent, that no light will injure it, and that, given proper care, it will last for ever. Even if it falls to the ground

it does not, as a rule, chip or get damaged ; it must not, of course, be trampled upon because the enamel is curved, and a heavy footfall may cause the enamel to flake off the copper or gold foundation. But, beyond a damage of that kind, an enamel is practically indestructible. I saw one a little while ago that, by accident, had even fallen into the fire. Luckily the fire was not hot enough to hurt it and, with the exception of a very slight damage at the edge, it had been retrieved in good condition.

The last man, or, one ought to say, the last two men to execute fine enamels in England in the *old* style were father and son, Henry and Henry P. Bone. Some of their miniatures are very large—cabinet size, one might call them. Many were copies of well-known pictures, others studies from life, especially those by the younger Bone ; and then they were succeeded by Essex, who was enamel painter to Queen Victoria—a clever enameller and an accomplished chemist. He wrote a book on enamel painting, and died in 1869. There is no special demand for the work of Essex, although some of his portraits are really quite beautiful ; but for the smaller works of Bone, especially those of the younger Bone, there is a constant demand.

Collectors will do well to take an enamel out of its case, or to get a jeweller to do so, because generally they will find the enameller's signature

on the back ; and that again is a delight in collecting enamels, because one can generally be certain whose work the portrait is, and, burnt in at the back there is often even more than the signature. Sometimes the account of when the enamel was made, sometimes the address of the artist, and occasionally, information respecting the person, all of which makes the enamel a great deal more interesting and worthy of a place in a good collection. Those who are in search of a new hobby and who are not disposed to pay the big prices now demanded for miniatures, whether early ones on paper, or late ones on ivory, would do well to collect these bright, gleaming enamel portraits and interest themselves in the stories of the artists who produced them.

There are some enamellers at the present day who are doing good work, but there has never arisen anybody who could equal the superb work of the Petitots, or the wonderful productions of their relative, Prieur. Sometimes the very frames that surround the enamels are masterpieces of enameller's work. There was one Frenchman who produced beautiful floral frames in enamel, and whose work is very rare indeed and fetches a high price. A little case full of enamel portraits is a great source of joy.

The Jones collection in the South Kensington Museum contains some beautiful works by Petitot, which anyone can go and see. There are also

some fine enamels in other parts of the same museum, and in the Salting collections. There are several other museums where enamels can be studied, notably the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, and the Holburne Museum at Bath.

CHAPTER XXVIII

WATCHES

FROM earliest childhood men have always loved mechanical toys, and a watch has something of the attraction of a living creature about it; it almost seems to possess life and to constitute itself a companion. It is, moreover, a thing of intrinsic beauty in itself.

There are infinite varieties of watches, hence there have been many collectors, and there are few things more delightful to possess.

It is practically hopeless to try and obtain a watch by the man who is said to have originated watch-making, Henlein (1480-1542), and one of whose production belonged to Martin Luther. I did see one once in Vienna, but the signature was undoubtedly a forgery, and I believe that one of the earliest known dated watches is one of 1505. The earliest watches were really table clocks, and they stood upon a table, desk, or *prie-dieu*, and were not carried on the person. When, later on, they came to be worn, it was openly, not in the pocket, but swung from a chatelaine or chain; the use of the pocket having

probably been introduced by the Puritans, whose dislike of display induced them to conceal their time-keepers from the public gaze.

Our word "fob" comes from the Low German *fubbe*, a pocket. When Shakespeare speaks of Jacques and says, "He drew a dial from his poke," he certainly does not speak of a pocket watch, but probably of some kind of portable sundial with a compass attached to it, because, if a watch in that day had been worn, it would be round the neck on a chatelaine, or set in a ring or bracelet. Malvolio speaks about winding up a watch, and Sebastian, in "The Tempest," says, "winding up the watch of his wit"; but these were table clocks, such as the one given to Elizabeth, and made by Bartholomew Nusam, and the one given to Queen Mary in 1556, and made by Nicholas Urseau.

These earlier watches were not always square. Some, especially those made for the heads of monastic houses, were cross-shaped; many of the Continental ones were in the shape of an egg; others represented a skull, while rock-crystal and various other precious materials were used in forming their cases. In the time of Louis XIII many were beautifully decorated in enamel, especially by artists who lived round about Blois, and these enamel watches are rare treasures which collectors are eager to obtain. What we know as pair-case watches came in about 1640,

when the outer case was sometimes of fish-skin, tortoiseshell, gold or leather, and chased and otherwise ornamented, while the inner watch was kept plain and severe in character. Some of these pair-case watches contain what are known as watch-papers, delightful little advertisements, printed on circular papers, to fit inside the outer case.

The introduction of a hand to denote the seconds and also the use of two hands on the watch instead of one, belongs to a period of about 1670. The earliest watches are German, and following them came the clever French mechanics, but in England we had a very famous school of watchmakers, from the time of Charles I, commencing, as regards really notable people, with Edward East, who was well at work in about 1635, and who was followed by one of the greatest English watchmakers, Tompion; and he by Graham and Quare. These three men represent the very best of English workmanship. There were a few notable men of even earlier date than this. For instance, William Anthony was clock-maker to Henry VIII; there is a fine clock in existence bearing his initials and dated 1571. Bartholomew Nusam, who worked for Elizabeth, was probably a Yorkshireman. David Ramsay, who made for James I, was a Scotsman; but others who preceded East were of foreign extraction, although many of them came over to England

and settled in this country. East was a Quaker, and many of the best English watchmakers belonged to that faith; for example, Quare, Wagstaffe, Tompion, Graham and Peckover were all Quakers. When Charles I played games in the Mall, the prizes for the competitions were very often what were called "Easts," meaning thereby a watch with its chain complete, made by Edward East, who resided near to the Tennis Court and then removed to Fleet Street, where we find him living in 1635. He was one of the ten persons named in the original charter of the Clockmakers' Company, and to the records of that Company we owe a great deal of information concerning English watch and clock makers.

Amongst watchmakers perhaps the very greatest of all was Louis Breguet, whose period was from 1747 to 1823, and no watchmaker ever exceeded him in originality or in skill. Almost all his watches are different from one another, and the dials are so beautiful that each watch is an artistic joy. Breguet loved to make complicated watches—those that would show the days of the month and the week, that would have, perhaps, two complete movements, or would be self-winding, the spring moving up and down when the watch was worn and the watch being wound up after its wearer had walked for about fifteen minutes. Repeating watches were a great joy to Breguet. Sometimes they repeated in different methods—



SOME INTERESTING OLD FRENCH WATCHES.



the hour when the face was upwards, and the date when the face was downwards, and the sound is derived from one, or even from two or three, different gongs.

The centenary of Breguet will be celebrated in Paris this year, and it is anticipated that an unrivalled collection of his watches will be exhibited on that occasion. One English collector, and he is the supreme authority on Breguet and on his watches, anticipates being able to show over a hundred of the most perfect examples of the work of this very ingenious craftsman. Breguet worked for Louis XV and Marie Antoinette. He once helped Marat to escape from an awkward situation, and Marat gave him a pass across the Channel in 1793. He stayed in England for two years and worked for George III, then went back again to Paris, found his factory had been burnt to the ground, rebuilt it, and for thirty years continued to produce the finest watches that have ever been seen. Fortunately, Breguet's papers and books are still in existence, and as he numbered all his watches the history of almost every one can be ascertained, even to the extent of knowing when the watch was returned to the maker for repair or alteration. No one quite knows how he compounded the silver that he used on the dials of his finest watches. There is a peculiar grey tint about the silver that is very attractive. Breguet's watches have frequently

been forged and copied, and the collector needs to be on his guard lest he should be taken in by a comparatively modern forgery. Once the beauty of a Breguet watch, however, is appreciated, a genuine movement is quickly detected, and there are certain peculiarities about the works and the signature on the dial with which Breguet collectors are well acquainted. A great many fine Breguets have got out of sight, and perchance some of them will be discovered now that people are beginning to talk about the coming commemoration and about the fine exhibition there will be of the works of Breguet, his son, and his grandson. A genuine Breguet watch is always well worth acquiring.

The business is still carried on in Paris and beautiful watches are on sale, but nothing can possibly be produced in the present day to surpass, for example, the magnificent watch Breguet made for Marie Antoinette, or those—that were almost equally important—made for Louis XVIII, the Prince Regent, Prince Demidoff, Princess Murat, Lord Gower, Lord Berwick, and many notable personages of his day.

The collector of watches should specialise. Some will keep to the old English pair-case watches, others seek the decorated ones of the period of Louis XIII; others again, watches in rock-crystal, others the finest examples of the early English makers, and yet others confine their attention to choice watches by some of the modern

makers—Dent, Frodsham or Smith. Then there are those who confine their attention entirely to watches by Breguet, and a very large number who just have two or three choice watches, thoroughly good timekeepers, either by first-rate English or French makers.

CHAPTER XXIX

DECANTER LABELS

AT the City office of an important person connected with the wine trade is the most interesting collection of decanter labels I have ever seen, and probably a collection which has no rival, except in the Brown collection at the London Museum. There are not many people who have taken the trouble to collect these interesting examples of silver work, and I can recommend those who are in search of a new hobby to gather together some of these pretty things. I have many myself, and I was much interested in seeing this collection. I suppose, originally, these labels were put upon bottles rather than upon decanters, because the very earliest are ring-shaped and would drop over the neck of the bottle, and there are plates which are attached to wire rings, and hang from these rings, and they also are intended, I expect, for bottles. The best ring-shaped ones are of ivory or bone and these are rare. It would be remembered that many of the old wine bottles now being carefully collected have badges upon them, a sort of stamp, seal or boss, to show for whom the wine was made,

and these stamps vary, and are in some cases of extreme interest, bearing the names of private persons who commissioned the wine, or had the bottles in their cellar marked in that fashion, or the names of the merchants who imported the wine. When these stamps on the bottles were done away with, then came the series of labels, to fasten on to the decanters, generally with pretty chains that hang round the neck of the decanter, and with labels of all sorts of charming shapes.

Some of the very best are shaped like vine leaves and have the name of the wine in perforated letters. My collector friend has a beautiful group of vine leaves in silver, with the word "claret" perforated upon it, and a single vine leaf for an Italian wine has the word "Bronti" in similar fashion, while another pendent vine leaf has upon it the word "Malmsly." Other labels are composed of various groups of these leaves, sometimes associated, as would be fitting, with a decoration representing a bunch of grapes. There is a beautiful label of this description in the London Museum, with the word "Bucellas" upon it; others are labelled "Sauterne," "Claret," "Hock" and "Madeira."

Sometimes the labels are more characteristic still; for instance, there is one representing a cask, and bearing above it the word "Claret"; another white wine label has the figure of Bacchus seated on a barrel, and some of the Port and

Madeira labels have an amusing representation of a squirrel upon them, sitting upright, happily enjoying a meal of nuts, and so offering a broad hint to the consumer of the port, madeira, or sherry, that nothing would be more favourable for the appreciation of the flavour of the wine than a few nuts.

Sometimes the labels are exceedingly simple. There are plain circular ones, just a roundel with the word "Madeira" or "Malaga" upon it. There are simple leaves, with hardly any veining, on which appear the words "Hock" or "Moselle," and there are some very plain labels, just bands of silver, one notably being intended for Champagne, and having the name of the wine spelt in curious fashion—"Champaign." In the collection there are many labels bearing the inscriptions "W. Wine," evidently meaning "white wine," and one wonders what was the particular white wine that was so much in favour in the eighteenth century that there was no need of describing it by name, the generic term being sufficient. Then there are some labels, intended for careful and economical people, which bear no name of a wine at all, but a place wherein a little label could be slipped, on which the name of the wine could be carefully printed by its owner, and the same label would do for different wines on different occasions.

Chased upon a few of the labels are figures of men engaged in wine pressing, or in gathering

grapes ; occasionally there are miniature Bacchi represented upon them, some of whom appear to have lingered too long at the wine-press ; and yet again, on others, there are large baskets represented—the type of basket still used in Southern and Central France for gathering up the grapes.

Some people had their crests and their coats of arms upon the labels, showing that they were expressly made for them, and that they were proud that the fact should be recognised—one, a fine Madeira label, appearing to represent a coronet. In the collection there are also some beautiful examples of decanter labels that are simply single letters, M, C, or G (large capitals), beautifully chased and highly ornate, the decoration generally introducing grapes in some form or other ; the M could have been used for Madeira, Malaga, Marsala, Mountain, Malmsey, or Moselle, or even for that curious wine called Masdeu, which came from the Roussillon, and which is a wine that we are told was at one time imported as port. In was, by the way, a rather curious thing to find in both these collections many labels bearing names referring to wines about which no one knows very much at the present day. We do not often meet with Hermitage in the wine merchant's lists, although this wine from the Côte du Rhône has recently come back into them in connection with the increasing demand there is for French rather

than for German wines. I have already referred to Masdeu, and there is "Styne" for Stein Hock; Côte Rôte, a wine that is imported from near to Lyons; Termo, which is a Portuguese white wine, and which sometimes appears on the list as Termeau; Sercial, which is a Madeira wine, and others.

One also finds labels for Canary, Cyprus, Tent, Sack, and Malaga, all wines that are little known at the present day. The labels show us what in the eighteenth century were the favourite wines. George IV was much attached to sherry, and there are more sherry labels than any others. Some of them are marked "Brown Sherry," others "Amontillado" (that is to say, the mountain wine grown at Montilla, near to Cordoba), but the majority just "Sherry" alone.

The next favourite wine was Madeira—and there must have been a very large quantity of it consumed in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries—and next, of course, comes Port; and one label from Stafford House, evidently made for the lover of a particularly precious wine, bears the words "Beeswing Port" upon it. Oddly enough, claret is spelt in two or three different ways upon the labels; sometimes it appears as "Clarete," sometimes "Clarett," occasionally "Clarret," and one label reads "After-dinner Claret," while the port labels are sometimes written as "Porto," sometimes as "White Port,"

sometimes as "Red Port," and sometimes the latter is abbreviated to "R. Port."

Champagne is spelled in all sorts of different ways on the labels—"Champaine," "Champaign," and "Champaign"—and Sauterne sometimes has the final "e" and sometimes is without it.

The labels are not all silver. In both collections there are some mother-of-pearl ones, and, what are rarer still, there are some beautiful ones of Battersea enamel. I once saw in a friend's house an exceedingly rare set of three labels, in pink Battersea enamel, with the inscriptions in black for port, sherry, and claret; and I also saw a very fine pink Battersea one, with decorations of bunches of grapes, the owner's crest at the upper part, and the inscription "White Port," but the Battersea enamel labels are the rarest of all, and next to these, perhaps, are the delightful ones made of mother-of-pearl, and which must have looked very pretty, hanging upon the decanters. About some of the names on them it is not easy to speak for certain. "Vidonia" is an unusual word to find. "Sayes" is another; it has been suggested that this should be "Scyes," and have reference to an Alsace-Lorraine wine, and "Vidonia" almost certainly refers to a Canary wine, coming from Teneriffe, and not imported at the present time.

Liqueurs were also labelled in the same way; there is one label having simply "Liquor" upon

it, another Curacoa, spelled in a very odd fashion—"Currosos," and one finds "Ratifee," "Cherry Brandy," "Kummell," and "Maraschino," while the British wines are represented in the collection by labels bearing the words "Shrub," "Elder," "Ginger," "Cowslip," "Orange," and "Raisin." There are cider labels, but the word as a rule is spelled "Cyder." Some of the labels are shell-shaped, some very good ones are in the shape of a large crescent, many are square, some are formed of the letters of the word combined in a pretty monogram, as, for example, one which represents the word "claret," others take the form of twisted ribbons, sometimes tied up in bow fashion, sometimes arranged in a twist. Some of the labels are rectangular, others are square. Sometimes they have beautiful decorated borders, and at other times the borders are quite simple and plain. In date, about the earliest is 1738, and they go on, down to the beginning of the nineteenth century. There are labels, of course, still being made, but I am only dealing with the old ones, and very pretty many of them must have looked on the decanters then in use. It strikes one, by the way, as being odd to find so many champagne labels, but it was the custom to decant champagne, and not to bring it to the table in bottles; even now, this habit is always adopted at the Royal table, and at the tables of many of the older members of the aristocracy. There is one old-fashioned

table, at which I have sat on many occasions, on which champagne is invariably served in tall, narrow-mouthed glass jugs, and the silver label hangs round the jug, and looks very pretty.

Taken altogether, wine labels form very attractive objects to collect. They are of infinite variety and dainty charm. They have the advantage of being delightful things to use in one's house, and a group of them, in a glass case, is a very pleasant thing to possess.

CHAPTER XXX

STRAW MARQUETERIE

IN the City of Peterborough, close to the Cathedral, is a small museum, and in one room, crowded together with insufficient space for careful scrutiny, is a collection, the finest in England, of about a hundred and seventy pieces of straw marqueterie work, made at the great prison that stood near to Stilton at Norman Cross, and which lasted from 1796 to 1816. In this prison, specially built for its purpose, and wholly destroyed when that purpose was at an end, were confined, during the Napoleonic Wars, some six thousand prisoners.

Their allowances were very meagre, and they were allowed to increase them by their own handiwork. There was a market held in the prison yard, and people used to attend there, and purchase from the prisoners the exquisite straw marqueterie work, so-called, for which they were responsible. It was not strictly marqueterie, because, although pieces of straw, dyed in very clever fashion in many colours, formed exquisite designs, the straw-work was only attached to the wood and not inlaid as, strictly speaking, mar-

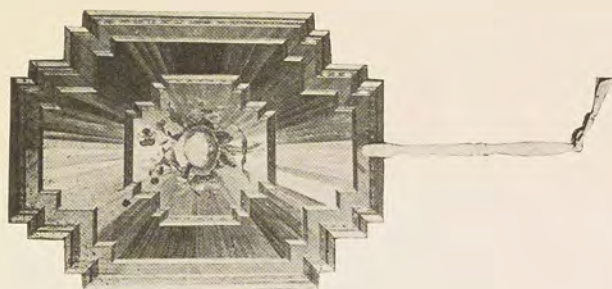
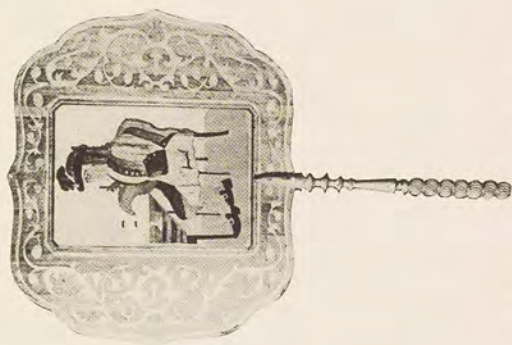
queterie should be ; but the result was delightful, and in this museum there are work-boxes and cabinets, desks, tea-caddies, dressing-cases, patch-boxes, holders for needles, pins and knitting-needles, hand fire-screens, snuff-boxes and watch-stands, holders for silk, picture frames, cases for telescopes and domino boxes, and all kinds of pieces of joinery work, decorated in amazing fashion by these French prisoners, with the coloured straw which they arranged so cleverly.

In some instances, the purchasers themselves supplied the wood, or even the box or cabinet, and the straw-work was done by the prisoners, but the names of only six men out of the six thousand have been handed down. Fortunately, we know the name of the man who was responsible for the best of the marqueterie pictures, amongst which the view of Peterborough Cathedral itself stands out supreme, and is by far the finest example of straw-work in the museum. That was done by a man named Jean de la Porte, and five other pieces are signed by Grieg, Ribout, Corn, Godfrow and Jacques Courny.

It is said that sometimes at the market as much as two hundred pounds changed hands, so eager were the prisoners to sell and the people round about to buy, and so delightful was the work. The money, of course, was divided amongst the men who had done the work, and, in some instances, hoarded until the hoped-for day of

release should come ; but very frequently it was sent over for safe keeping to France by accredited agents, and put away by the prisoner, hoping that it might be useful for his family or himself when he came back to his native country. Contemporary letters speak often of this market, especially in 1818, and sometimes it was held on a Sunday.

It will be remembered, of course, that the prisoners had large quantities of straw at their disposal, because their beds were made entirely of that material, and no doubt they could obtain finer straw by arrangement with their warders. How they got their dyes no one quite knows. The popular idea that the browns were stained with tea and coffee falls to the ground when we know from the records that neither of these beverages were served out to them. Probably there were bottles of dyes to be obtained, and perhaps some of the colours were made by the prisoners themselves from vegetables. At one time the prisoners also did a great deal of straw plait work, but eventually that was forbidden, because straw plait was taxed in 1802, and their work would have entered into competition with that of the plait-makers of Bedfordshire. Nevertheless, they did continue to do straw-plait work, and even to make hats and bonnets, but these had to be smuggled out, and there was quite a trade in this smuggling.



THREE EXAMPLES OF STRAW WORK, FROM THE PETERBOROUGH MUSEUM.

They were expressly forbidden to undersell the people round about, and hence, perhaps, the origin of this straw marqueterie work, which was not otherwise made in the neighbourhood, and consequently entered into no competition with local trade. The men used to make slippers and shoes, and were permitted to use list, but forbidden leather, for the same sort of reason.

We know very much what the prison was like, because in Paris, in Les Invalides, there is a wonderful model of it, made by one of the prisoners and there are various plans of it still remaining, not only in Peterborough, but in other places. A part of its wall still stands, but on the site it occupied there is now an important memorial to all the prisoners who died in this gaol, both French and Dutch, and the number was, unfortunately, a very large percentage. There were other similar prison-houses—one in Surrey, another in Falmouth, and others in various parts of the country—and in most of them straw marqueterie work seems to have been done, probably the result of the transfer of prisoners from one jail to another, when the details concerning such labour were carried on to other prisoners; and we, a hundred years after the prisoners and their prison have vanished from Norman Cross, can only marvel at the skill and patient perseverance which accomplished such exquisite work under such very difficult conditions. It was, of course,

only a proportion of the prisoners who actually did the work, but it has been stated that sometimes there were several hundreds fitting together the pieces of this wonderful straw-work, and by far the largest proportion of the pieces of straw marqueterie came from this particular prison at Norman Cross, the number of pieces executed at the other provincial prisons being negligible, in comparison with that made near Peterborough.

Nowadays examples of French prisoners' straw marqueterie are precious ; boxes, cabinets and pictures, whenever they come into the market, fetch substantial sums ; but there are surely many persons in Huntingdonshire, Rutland, and thereabouts, who still have examples of this graceful work, to which, perchance, they have attached little importance. The Peterborough museum is the place in which to study it, but there are several collectors who are eager to acquire examples of the work, especially of the pictures, one of which is illustrated in Dr. Walker's important book on the prison, to which all who collect straw marqueterie have to go for information. He also illustrates a charming work-box and two fire-screens, objects of considerable beauty, and it is well to draw attention to a very distinctive kind of decoration, highly appreciated by collectors and, perhaps, not hitherto sufficiently well known.

One of the prisoners invented a method of splitting the straw, and devised a little wheel-like tool, with a spiked centre and four tiny knives, by which the straw was split up neatly and accurately into the sizes required. I have a distinct remembrance, as a child, of finding one of these straw splitters in the drawer of a cabinet decorated at Norman Cross, and testing it, with great admiration of its ingenuity. These same tools were made with two, three and even five and six knives. I have examples of them all, but there was a wooden tool resembling a clock case which had various sets of knives in it, and I have never yet been able to obtain one of these although I remember seeing it in use half a century ago.

CHAPTER XXXI

BELLS

AN old church bell was sold at one of the London auction-rooms lately. The circumstance is very unusual. Very rarely indeed are church bells the object of auction sales, and I am inclined to think that, if it could be known from which church a bell has been taken, the return of it could be demanded.

I rather think, like parish registers, church bells cannot be sold in what may be called "market overt." This one is, so I hear, believed to have come from a church which has been wholly destroyed.

I saw another, some time ago, in a nobleman's house, which had also come from a church that had been pulled down, and is now swung as a dinner bell.

I suppose there are no collectors of church bells because, practically, there are none to be had; but there is a considerable demand for other kinds of bells. For example, those beautiful sets of four or five that were put on the leading horse of a team, and were known as team bells, and by which the approach of horses in a long narrow

lane was heralded, are in great demand, and very charming dinner bells they make. They are often of beautiful sound, and made of really good metal. There is a set, I am told, at Kingston, in the museum, and I have seen others.

Then there are sheep bells, generally circular, sometimes made of bronze, occasionally quite ancient, and at times having initials or dates upon them. In Austria and Switzerland they and the somewhat larger cow bells are rectangular—more like that wonderful St. Patrick's bell in the Dublin Museum. The old English sheep bells are often very harmonious in tone, and are pleasant things to use, mounted up for handling. The foreign ones are not so harmonious, they are more shrill; but in amongst the mountains their sound is very pleasant.

We keep up curious customs with regard to bells—the Pancake Bell, rung on Shrove Tuesday in some places, Harvest Bells and Market Bells, the solemn Passing Bell, the alarming Fire Bell, and, in churches, the Sanctus Bell. There is a beautiful old Sanctus Bell in a Catholic church in Surrey, that was stolen once, together with two or three other treasures from the church. The country people tell you that the bell persisted in ringing, and so the thief threw the treasures away, and the bell went on ringing till it was found and restored to its place. It certainly did go away from the church, and it

certainly is back there now; so much of the story I know is true.

I saw a beautiful silver Sanctus Bell a little while ago on a dinner table. It was not of the kind that hung in the belfry, but such as the altar-boy uses on the steps. It was Spanish, and had come from some fine church, no doubt, but now put to quite different purposes.

There was a splendid silver bell sold at the Strawberry Hill sale in 1842, which Walpole said had been made for Pope Clement VII by Benvenuto Cellini, and had come from Parma into the possession of Lord Rockingham, from whom Walpole had obtained it. After the Strawberry Hill sale it passed into the possession of Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild. It is absolutely encrusted with beautiful ornamentation, chased in most marvellous fashion, but is not now attributed to Cellini. It is probably German and very likely made by Jamnitzer, who died in Nuremberg in 1585. There is a wonderful bell that belonged to Queen Mary Stuart and, later on, to Mr. Bruce, of Kennet. It has the Royal Arms of Scotland upon it, the Greek monogram for the name of our Lord, and various Latin inscriptions, one of them saying that the Queen used it to summon her attendants, and, perhaps, that also was originally made for ecclesiastical purposes. It was bequeathed by the Queen, in her will of February, 1577, to her secretary Nau, and in

1587 it appears in the inventory of the things that were at Fotheringay Castle. It is a very beautiful bell, and another very fine one is believed to be at Windsor, and belonged to Queen Anne Boleyn.

There are two interesting mediæval bells in the British Museum—one which came from Pickering, and is a fourteenth-century bell engraved with a crucifix and saints; the other, a Flemish bell, dated 1574 and having upon it the maker's name.

Some delightful bronze bells have appeared more than once in sales; early Italian work, made very likely at Padua, and one was certainly the work of Riccio, and fetched several hundreds of pounds. Really fine bronze bells are great treasures, and these were generally made for domestic use, the altar bells being, as a rule, silver or very fine bronze.

The art of bell-founding is ancient, and very good bells have always been made in this country. One of the firms of bell-makers, Mears, goes back to 1570 in direct succession, and two other notable firms—Warner's of London and Taylor's of Loughborough—are also very ancient firms. I believe the earliest dated church bell in England is the one at Duncton, of 1369; there are a great many bells in belfries of the sixteenth century.

If collectors cannot obtain church bells, they can do something which is almost as interesting—

climb up the belfries and make rubbings of the inscriptions and dates upon the church bells. Very often, in describing the possessions of a church, the bells are forgotten, and yet they are often as old as anything in the church, sometimes contemporary with the oldest part of the building itself. There are various books on the church bells of different countries, and they give fascinating reading, specially if the compiler has been successful enough to dig up information concerning the bells from the makers, or about those persons who gave the bells.

In many instances, church bells and altar bells have the names of the donors upon them, sometimes accompanied by prayers for the repose of their souls, because the bells are given to the glory of God, and were always the subject of special services, which the Catholic Church still retains when she sprinkles and blesses new bells intended for a church.

In examining church bells, care must be taken not to overlook the little bell which often hangs in quite another part of the church, and which was rung at the Elevation, especially as at times it is the oldest bell in the church, and the collector of bell rubbings and bell inscriptions must be a person who is cool and level-headed, because he may have to climb very rickety ladders and walk about over very old woodwork, in search of information which the belfry may contain.

Curfew bells are still rung in many parishes in England, at one place, Wallingford, it is said the practice has never ceased since the Conquest, and that the bell on which it is rung belongs to an Anglo-Saxon period. Certainly, in many places curfew is rung on very ancient bells, and church bells may be regarded as almost indestructible; the only thing that can injure them is when the church catches fire, and the woodwork of the belfry is burned, and the bells fall to the ground: that has happened sometimes.

The sound of bells may be a great joy; on the other hand, if one is too near the church, and there are enthusiastic campanologists in the parish, they may be a terrible nuisance, but there is no such bell-ringing in England as there is in Russia. The Russians are very fond of bells, and tune them to all kinds of notes, and very melodious are the Russian bells. Their largest bell stands outside the Kremlin, and cannot be used, because an unfortunate accident has cracked it, but they have many splendid bells, with glorious, rich, deep notes.

Two curious bells that I saw a little while ago had come from a canopy that had been held by the Barons of the Cinque Ports over George III at his coronation, and had come down in descent from the posterity of one of those Barons. They were unusual in shape and in tone. The Barons, I believe, still are summoned to the coronation,

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but the days of the canopy with its pendent bells
are past.

In a garden in Cornwall, I saw suspended a fine bronze ship bell, almost the only thing that had been saved from a wreck ; and there are several ship bells to be seen in several local museums in places down by the sea coast, especially in the west of England. One bell-metal bell, shining resplendent as though it was made of gold, adorns the hall of a ship owner's seaside residence ; and, curiously enough, quite close to him, to point out a dangerous shoal, swings one of those monotonous bell-buoys, with its dreary, never-ceasing note.

CHAPTER XXXII

BONBONNIÈRES

SNUFFBOXES and bonbonnières are often confused one with the other, but this should not be the case. The easiest method to determine concerning them is to examine the hinges. These, in French boxes, are made with peculiar care and skill, where a snuffbox is concerned, in order that no snuff should find its way, either into the mechanism of the hinge or out into the pocket where the snuffbox lies ; and if a box when shut up, forces out a little puff of air, and closes with extreme precision, it is almost certainly a snuffbox. There was no such particular attention given to the bonbonnières, although they closed quite well, and kept back the air to a great extent from their contents. Then the bonbonnière was often made of a material that was particularly precious and fragile, because it was more usually intended for standing on the table than was the snuffbox.

The finest bonbonnière of modern times known to me was the one which came into the market last May. It had originally belonged to Mr. Alfred de Rothschild, and was of Sèvres porcelain,

decorated with paintings of very high quality, no doubt by Dodin after Boucher, and the gold mounts, beautifully made, were signed by the king's jewellers, Fossin et Fils. The box was a very wonderful piece of work, the paintings delightful, the gold exquisitely carved and chased, and it fetched four thousand pounds. With it were sold several other boxes, one or two of which were most certainly snuffboxes, and others just as surely intended for bonbonnières.

I wonder what kind of confectionery these boxes used to contain? Certainly not chocolates such as we have at present: the French bonbonnière would only hold two or three of the modern chocolates, and until Menier began to start his important chocolate industry in the nineteenth century, there was no special trade in chocolate in France. In the very early part of that century his father was making the solid chocolate, and he improved and increased the manufactory.

We have our words "comfit" and "lozenge" from the French, and the original lozenges were of what we now term a lozenge shape, a pointed diamond, but the notion of combining drugs with sugar for lozenges is quite a recent one, and the earliest lozenges were simply scented. The comfit was a dry sweet, and in all probability the oldest sweetmeats of the present day are the sugared almonds and the sugared coriander seeds which children know as sugar-plums or caraway comfits.

These bonbonnières, it may be expected, contained sweetmeats of that kind, certainly dry and probably rather hard, and what are known as white Scottish sweets, which include cloves covered with hard white sugar, are the direct descendants of the kind of French confectionery they held. It was introduced into Scotland in Mary Queen of Scots' time, and this is just another example of the way in which Scotland preserves many French habits, words and phrases which she has enshrined in her language and manners, and which still remain as evidence of the close connection that formerly existed between the two countries.

There are many delightful gold bon-bon boxes to be found, some of them set with enamel, either a portrait or a tiny landscape.

There were silver ones also, although these are not so common. Then, in England, there were many such boxes made of enamel, produced both at Battersea and at Bilston. The potteries of Chelsea, Derby, Bristol, Worcester, and other places, also made porcelain boxes, mounted in metal, in which dry sweetmeats were kept, and there are many to be found of Capo di Monti ware, some of which are quite large caskets to stand on the table.

These also were made both at Dresden and in Vienna, and are always said to have been originally produced to hold the candied fruits that for many generations have been made at Grasse and at

various other places along the maritime coast of France and Italy, and even more extensively in Sicily. There, quite big boxes as large as tea-caddies are to be found, both of Italian pottery and of Capo di Monti porcelain, and these, packed with the candied fruits of Sicily, were no doubt very acceptable presents.

The porcelain boxes of China or Japan in some cases contained tea, in others spice. The Dutch, to whom we were at one time indebted for almost all our spice, imported a good deal of it in lacquer boxes, and in similar boxes made of porcelain, and these were regarded as large bonbonnières, holding most acceptable gifts of spices, dried ginger, and various other Oriental dainties.

What exactly the glass bonbonnières were for one hardly knows. They must have been very fragile ; only a few really old ones have survived ; there were some creamy ones made in Bristol, and perhaps they were toilet boxes, or to hold powder and other adjuncts for the toilet-table. The small, square Chinese glass boxes were perhaps for snuff, but that is not certain, because snuff, as a rule, was contained in small bottles. The special demand, however, is for the French bonbonnières, often of gold, generally beautifully made and daintily decorated, and in the extravagant days that preceded the Revolution, there were large numbers of them made for presents,

and very substantial sums were paid (or at least in some cases owed) for them.

These, however, are beyond the reach of most collectors, but tortoiseshell ones are often to be found, and the prettiest are ornamented in spots of gold, in what is known as piqué work. Then there are the eighteenth-century silver bonbon boxes, decorated in repoussé, and a much larger variety of shapes made in Holland, some quite tiny, square, canister-shaped ones, often called patch-boxes, but certainly not for patches, because they are too small to enable one to draw out the patch by putting two fingers into the box, and moreover, too deep; patch-boxes are shallower things, and generally oval, so that the two fingers can go easily into it. Moreover, there are some circular china ones made at the less important Staffordshire potteries, often quite pretty, and sometimes with a portrait upon them; and I have seen them made of shell and of ivory, while there are many of Wedgwood, not the toilet boxes with the loose Wedgwood lid, but mounted in metal and cleverly hinged. There are also boxes of a French red enamel, and these are sometimes lined with tortoiseshell, and occasionally mounted with fine chased ormolu work.

CHAPTER XXXIII

LOWESTOFT WARE

ALMOST every amateur collection of English porcelain, whether large or small, contains some pieces which the owner calls "Lowestoft ware." There are fine tall mugs or punch bowls, charmingly decorated in wreaths of flowers, generally of a pink hue, and always including roses, or there are portions of tea-services, notably canisters, stranger-dishes, or cups and saucers, ornamented with monograms, crests or coats of arms, and having simple, graceful borders.

One is told, as a rule, that ware decorated with the pink rose was painted at Lowestoft, and one is generally informed either that there was a factory at Lowestoft for the production of this ware, or, perhaps, by another collector, that plain Oriental china was imported into England in large quantities, and decorated at Lowestoft for different persons, with their crest, monogram, or arms.

It does not seem to strike the amateur collector that there are no tea services to be found of the plain ware before the decoration was put on at Lowestoft, such as there certainly would be if

quantities of this Oriental ware came into England and were sent to Lowestoft to be decorated. Moreover, a careful examination of the ware in question shows that it so closely resembles Oriental china that it must certainly have been made in the East, and in such case, why not decorated in the place in which it was made?

The doubts thrown upon the story led for a while to the impression that perhaps there was no factory at all at Lowestoft, and that all that had been declared by Chaffers and other writers to be Lowestoft decorated ware was Oriental; but in December, 1902, the question was cleared up, and it is now generally accepted that the armorial china, vast quantities of which were brought over to England by officials of the East India Company, was not only made, but also decorated in the East.

It is almost sure that the drawings of the arms or the monograms were prepared in England, and were handed to the Eastern artists for them to copy: generally the copies are accurate. Sometimes there are curious little errors, such as only an Eastern artist would make, but the ware was not English, nor was the decoration done in this country.

In Lowestoft there was, however, a factory. An account of this factory in 1757 was given in the "History of Lowestoft," which was published in 1790. The works gave employment to some

sixty or seventy men, and they were sufficiently important to render necessary an agency and warehouse in London, but in 1803 the pottery was closed down, and later on the premises were used as a malting house by Messrs. Morse, of the Crown Brewery, and it was when they altered one of their kilns that fragments of china, plaster moulds, and various other things were found, which cleared up the whole question as to the Lowestoft factory.

There has been for a long time, in the collection of a Mr. Seago, a series of pieces of Lowestoft ware, things which he had bought from Robert Browne, great-grandson of the original potter in the place, and these pieces eventually passed into the collection of Mr. Frederick Crisp, who illustrated most of them in a privately prepared catalogue, and who, a year later, issued another privately printed book, with illustrations of the factory, and of all the various moulds which had been found on this site. We do, therefore, know for certain something about the Lowestoft ware.

It was, as a rule, blue and white, but there were some pieces decorated with flowers, even including the well-known roses, and with armorial bearings, although very different in such detail from the pieces of Oriental ware so decorated which for a long time masqueraded under the name of Lowestoft. The ware was not specially beautiful, nor particularly interesting. It was a local china,

very popular in the immediate district. Several pieces had views of Lowestoft Church upon them. Others such inscriptions as "A Trifle from Lowestoft," or "A Present from Lowestoft," and one quite notable mug, bears the arms of the Blacksmiths' Company.

There were certainly some tea canisters, some sprinkler dishes, and some tea-pots, and the shape of both the tea canisters and the tea-pots was undoubtedly derived from Oriental ware, but the one unusual feature of Lowestoft ware was that the factory produced a series of what were called "birth tablets," circular pieces of ware, measuring from two and a half inches diameter up to five inches in diameter, recording the birth of local people, and several of these with the names of such persons as Samuel Wright, Robert Rope, Mary Ward, Sarah Mason, Jonathan Downing, and others, are illustrated in Mr. Crisp's volume. The spelling is erratic and eccentric, the lettering always clear, but not very good, and the pieces were issued in 1772, 1775, 1788, 1793 and 1796, and other years. They constitute the really remarkable pieces made at Lowestoft, and collectors are very eager to get hold of them.

It is also a curious feature of that ware that on many pieces are initials, and even dates. For instance, on the bottom of the Blacksmiths' mug appears the inscription "James and Sarah Hacon, 1775," on a round flat bottle are the initials,

"I.B.," and the date 1778. On the bottom of one of the mugs is the name Hughes, with the date September 4th, 1766, and on one of the tea-pots are the initials of the same man, with the date 1761. Another tea-pot is inscribed "Elizabeth Johnson, February 5th, 1768," and a water-bottle, "Maria Ann Hoyler, 1770," while the tea-pot with Lowestoft Church on it has the initials "S.C.," which stand for "Sarah Crisp," and it bears the date 1767. A cup and saucer are inscribed "Maria Crowfoot, 1778," and another one has no name upon it, but bears the date January 27th, 1796, so that, from these dates, we know the period in which the Lowestoft factory executed its best pieces, and we also gather the impression that it was very much of a family affair, and that tea-pots and birth tablets, cups and saucers and mugs, were made for local people, or for those who were more or less connected in intimate relationship with the proprietor of the factory, or with the potters who worked in it. All that gives to genuine Lowestoft ware a special and unusual interest.

Mr. Crisp purchased what he could from the various dealers, as well as from Mr. Seago, but he was convinced that there were more pieces in existence, and it is important to discover some of these missing pieces. Probably there are houses round about Lowestoft that still cherish, without knowing very much about them, examples of this

soft paste porcelain from a pottery which had a very small production, and such pieces of ware collectors would be glad to acquire.

The discovery in 1902 was extremely important, because it cleared up all sorts of theories and ideas, and enabled the historian of English ware to have a definite series of data upon which to base the information he possessed concerning this little-known pottery.

It also proved that Chaffers, in his standard book, had jumped to conclusions that were not well founded, and that his statements needed the correction which Litchfield, in his later edition, gave.

CHAPTER XXXIV

LETTER-WEIGHTS AND DOOR-PORTERS

ON the old Chain Pier at Brighton, I remember seeing, when quite a small boy, at the extreme end, a stall full of interesting things made of glass. The old woman who kept it came from Stourbridge, and, as a child, I used to delight in the letter-weights, composed of canes of various coloured glass, forming intricate decoration, resembling beautiful anemones, which she used to sell, and in the balls full of water, which contained, as a rule, a figure of a man with an umbrella. On shaking these balls a heavy snowstorm appeared, and one then realised the idea of the man with the umbrella. In a few moments the particles of white that were contained in the ball fell to its base again, and then one had to shake it up, to produce another snowstorm.

My grandfather had on his writing-table many of the letter-weights which he bought from this old woman, mostly circular, but some of them square. He gave me a couple, but they have gone the way of most children's toys. At the same stall the old woman had green glass door-porters of various

shapes, some tall and pointed, in which, superimposed, one on the other, were a series of flowers, flecked with tiny air-bubbles, and rising out of a kind of flower-pot. Others were circular, and appeared to be full of water, but were really crowded with bubbles of air, and in some there were convolvuli, growing out of what appeared to be a grassy plat.

These also were found in my grandfather's house, and were always a joy to me, when I wondered how in the name of fortune the flowers were deposited within the green lumps of glass.

On my grandmother's dressing-table, obtained from the same stall was a set of toilet objects, two or three scent-bottles, and a ring tray, and, I believe, an inkstand, all of which had this Millefiori work at the base of them, and I have been told that, so common were the glass paper-weights made by the workmen in the kilns at Stourbridge in their spare time, and for their own amusement, that at one time, they were ornaments in their gardens, and even edgings to their garden paths.

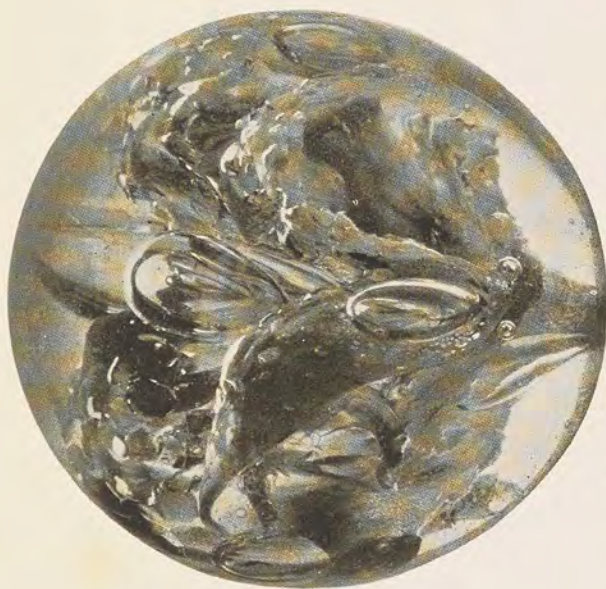
Recently, in the house of an old friend, I came across, to my great delight, several examples of these charming Millefiori letter-weights, and I gathered that he had given some attention to them, and he had two or three that were dated 1848. He told me that all the dated ones that he had ever seen had, in conjunction with the dates,

some figures of animals, which, it would appear, were a sort of mark of the workmen who had made them.

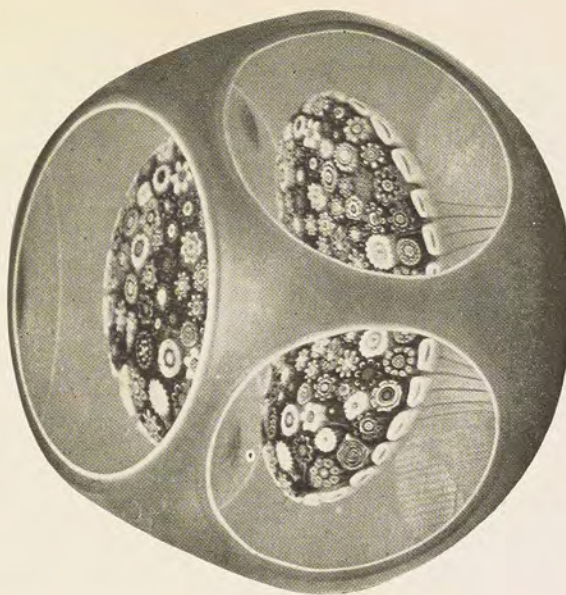
Lately, I have seen the largest collection, I suppose, in existence, of this kind of glass, and I find there are four dates known to exist: 1845, 1846, 1847, and 1848, and that some of the letter-weights of 1847 have the initial "B," while there are others of 1848 that are also marked "H," and yet others of that date that are marked "S.L." Nobody at present, however, has been able to determine whose these initials are.

It surely should not be impossible, in the neighbourhood of Stourbridge, where the letter-weights were certainly made, to find out who were the clever workmen whose names are represented by the H, the B, and the S.L., because men who lived in '47 and '48, and who made this sort of work, as it was certainly made for the '51 Exhibition, must surely be remembered, and their children are probably still living. There was a great demand at the time of the 1851 Exhibition for this very charming Millefiori work, some examples of which in colour appeared in *The Connoisseur* in the December number for 1920, and it was probably about that time that the various bottles were made which have this floral decoration in their bases or their knobs.

There were also bell-pulls made of it, large ball ends for portière rods, handles for wardrobes,



A GREEN GLASS PAPER-WEIGHT CONTAINING
FLOWERS SPRINKLED WITH DEW.



BRISTOL GLASS MILLEFIORI PAPER-WEIGHT,
DATED 1848.



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door handles, ink-pots, eggs to be used in the heel of a stocking when it was being darned, and even the handles of knives, forks and spoons, because, in a celebrated collection I have just seen there was a complete set of dessert knives and forks and spoons, with handles covered with this anemone-like decoration in colour.

The door-porters perhaps belong to a rather earlier age, but even those must have been still in process of manufacture when I was a tiny boy, because those which I saw on the stall at Brighton Chain Pier varied from month to month, and when one was bought, another speedily took its place.

A few years ago, in buying some Bristol and Nailsea glass, I bought a rough lump of the glass that was used in the preparation of these door-porters, and which had evidently been put aside, perhaps as waste. The skill involved in producing them must have been very considerable, especially in those of the superimposed flowers, because they had to be very dexterously set in, one above the other, and then the whole thing sealed up with extreme accuracy, a certain amount of air being left in, which rests on the leaves of the flowers and produces a delightful effect.

The big, square lumps of the Millefiori work are not often to be met with now, but are amongst the most important to the collector; one cube that I have seen has the date 1845 in about a

dozen different places, the figures most delicately produced in black and white, and standing out quite clearly. Another paper-weight of the same date is made like a large ball, with a curved top and a flattened base. Some of them are made of what is called "Latticinio" work, white canes of glass cleverly twisted together, something like the canes that one finds in the stems of the eighteenth-century wine-glasses, and this is associated with floral mosaics of extreme beauty.

There are all sorts of things in glass that one can collect, but few things that are more delightful in colour, and possessed of greater charm, than these Millefiori letter-weights. Some of the glass ornaments made by Apsley Pellatt, with portrait medallions on them, in silver lustre, are extremely beautiful, and those are not often to be seen now, but the letter-weights must have been made in such large numbers that it surely ought not to be difficult to form a collection of them.

The scent bottles, in some instances, could have held very little scent, and the mosaics were so disposed on the bottom of the bottle that they looked as though they were loose in it, and it was suggested that, if one poured out the eau-de-Cologne, one could get at these pieces of loose mosaic. It was soon found, however, that the bottle was a kind of puzzle bottle, only holding perhaps a teaspoonful of clear spirit, and when one removed that, one found that the mosaic was

by no means loose, but was actually part of the bottle, although, at first sight, it seemed to be floating at the base of the fluid.

As to the snowstorms, they varied in design: sometimes they contained a cottage, sometimes Little Red Ridinghood with her dog, sometimes two or three figures, none too warmly clad, and the snow was of varying density, one beautiful ball, I remember, containing so much snow that it appeared, to one's great enthusiasm, to almost cover up Little Red Ridinghood, and to smother up the colour of her cloak. My own children recollect having these, purchased by me years afterwards in Brighton, although not, I fancy, bought, as certainly my own were, on the Chain Pier, but they also have gone the way of children's toys, and I have not seen one of those snowstorms, until, in my friend's collection, I saw a wonderful example. I wish that I could obtain one now.

There seems to be little in print about the Stourbridge Glass Works, and not much more about the works at Bristol. About the Apsley-Pellatt Glass Works there are two books to be got, both of them rare and very seldom to be seen, one called "The Origin of Glass Manufacture," another, more interesting, called "The Curiosities of Glass-making." The whole subject is, however, well worth investigation, and to collectors who desire pretty objects for their collection, I can strongly recommend letter-weights and door-porters.

CHAPTER XXXV

LUSTRE WARE

OCCASIONALLY, in old cottages and farm-houses, one finds genuine examples of English lustre ware. Collectors must beware, however, because there is such a thing as "planting," and in many instances dealers go round in country districts and "plant" examples of lustre ware—which may possibly be old, but are very likely to be modern—in suitable houses, trusting to the visit of confiding persons who take lunch or tea in the cottage and who, attracted by the lustrous objects on the mantelshelf, proceed to endeavour to purchase them, feeling quite sure that they are acquiring bargains at a very low price.

Really fine old English lustre is well worth having. There are three kinds of it—the silver, the copper, and the purple, as it is called. The oldest silver lustre is on a black or brown body. Later on it was made on a creamy body, but one gets the extreme brilliance of the silver lustre on nothing but the brown or brownish-black body.

It was not actually silver that was used, but an

oxide of platinum, the first coat being composed of platinum dissolved in nitric acid and treated with a spirit obtained from tar, painted with a large brush over the earthenware and then fired. Then came the second coat, which gave it its rich appearance, added in the form of oxide of platinum, produced by sal ammoniac. The shapes were generally those which were also used in silver, and consequently, at a distance, it is not easy to detect the difference between a fine piece of silver lustre and a similar piece made in the precious metal itself ; in fact, some of the old tea-pots that were made in the silver lustre are almost identical in their appearance with the silver ones, and it is not until one handles them that one is aware of the divergence.

In buying silver ware it is well to look out for pieces that are on a dark ground or body. They always have a far richer, fuller effect of colour than those that are on cream.

The copper ware is much more frequently to be found, and belongs to a later period—about 1824—and copper lustre is still being made at various Staffordshire potteries, but the finish is not as smooth, and the colour is not as clear and mirror-like because, as the small proportion of gold which the old potters used with the copper is generally omitted nowadays, the copper has lost lustre and depth.

What the Leeds manufactory called the “purple”

lustre was of a rose shade with a metallic gloss upon it. Pieces entirely of this lustre are *exceedingly* rare. It is, however, very often to be found in bands round mugs, goblets or jugs. It was very difficult to obtain a perfect effect of colouring, and the firing sometimes injured it, so that very seldom indeed is it found applied altogether to a piece.

The shapes in the copper and the purple are not quite as fine, as a rule, as those in the silver ; the majority are jugs, but in the silver there are salt-cellars and tea-pots, shaving-cups and basins, and various things intended for tea ware, and occasionally vases, but these latter are particularly unusual.

The copper was cheaper and it was applied to more ordinary objects of everyday use. The collectors who desire lustre ware very often unite with it some other pots which were made at the same factory, those that are called agate or tortoise shell, or pieces made of an absolutely black basalt, which forms a very pleasing foil for the lustre. All of these wares were made in Staffordshire ; Wedgwood did some wonderful black basalt, and he also did some agate and some tortoise shell, first of all for knife-handles, and then for small vases or pots, agate being made of various coloured clays mingled together, the mottled or tortoise shell made in something the



THREE FINE OLD ENGLISH LUSTRE JUGS.



same way, but worked upon, while the clay or slip was wet, with a feather, a tool or a comb, producing an effect resembling that of marbled paper or tortoise shell.

Very few of these pieces are marked. The collector must not search for marks or names upon them, and as they came from various potteries, it is seldom safe to attribute them to any special potter. The pieces made at the Leeds pottery were, however, the best, and they generally can be identified by their lightness and by a particular charm of deep, full lustre or effect. The Leeds black basalt ware, which contained a considerable proportion of manganese, is not quite as smooth or as highly polished as Wedgwood's, and for that reason, many collectors rather prefer it, because Wedgwood's lathe work took away a little from the simplicity and dignity of the piece and engine turning was out of place on pottery. Some of the prettiest pieces of the black are hot-water jugs, others are coffee-pots or butter-pots, vases, tea-canisters, sugar-basins, and sometimes busts; all are worth attention and represent English potteries which have long ago disappeared and which produced some excellently good results.

Marked pieces are especially rare, and if anything can be found marked "Leeds Pottery" or "Hartley, Green and Co," or

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"C.G.," referring to Charles Green, or "L.P." which is the abbreviation of the words "Leeds Pottery," then the collector is particularly fortunate, as such pieces have a distinctive value and are in great demand amongst collectors.

CHAPTER XXXVI

OAK CHESTS

PROVIDED that one has an old house, and that space is not too serious a consideration, old oak chests are delightful things to collect and are gradually becoming more and more difficult to obtain and, in consequence, more and more precious.

The furniture collector must, however, be very careful in purchasing them, to avoid forgeries. There are lots of forged chests on the market, and only experience will teach him how to identify the originals from the fakes. He has a broad scope before him, because such chests were made in the thirteenth century, and their use continued up to the very end of the seventeenth.

As a rule, the plainer an oak chest is the better and the older it is. The very earliest of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were almost entirely plain, carving occurring upon them with great rarity and then only very simple work—rough circles or geometric stars, and nothing more.

The oldest chests, moreover, were wrought out with an adze, and the timber was not sawn out. In many cases it will be noticed that it was

riven, that is to say, split with a rivening tool, and there are no great iron hinges such as appear at a later period. These very early chests are occasionally to be seen in churches, where they were the repository for vestments or documents, and sometimes when they have been ejected by ignorant persons from the church, they find their way into a village shop. In fact, one of the earliest I have ever seen, which certainly belonged to the fourteenth century, was in a blacksmith's shop in Cornwall, and was used as a repository for tools and horse shoes.

The old chests are a little clumsy in form ; the lids have no special moulding on them and are generally attached by pins to the boxes, but the chest itself is not framed up with any mortice and tenon, that belongs to a much later period ; it is just roughly put together with pegs or iron nails, the finer kind of good carpentering being reserved for quite other things and made use of by a class of workmen very different to the persons who made the oak chests. Sometimes the early chests have big squarish handles, because monastic chests were removed from monastery to monastery, and were often swung between horses when the journey was a long one. Very occasionally they have curved lids, but as a rule the lids are flat.

There are a few of these chests to be seen that are of very great length, at least six feet long

and sometimes over seven feet, and these, it has been suggested, were not for vestments or documents, but for complete suits of armour, carefully stowed away, in proper position, in such long boxes.

The collector can hardly hope to find one of these huge chests, as they are of very rare occurrence. Very early chests do not have legs or feet or plinths, all these were of later introduction. When one comes to the fifteenth and sixteenth century boxes, one has to examine very carefully any plinth or foot, because the old chests, as a rule, stood right down on the ground, and feet, even to a fifteenth or sixteenth century chest, are generally additions and, in some cases, the carving has been added to, so that the chest can be raised a little above the floor. Seventeenth century chests often had feet or square supports which lifted them off the floor. Of those there are plenty to be got, but even they must be scrutinised with care, because they are frequently fabricated out of odd pieces of oak and are not genuine chests at all.

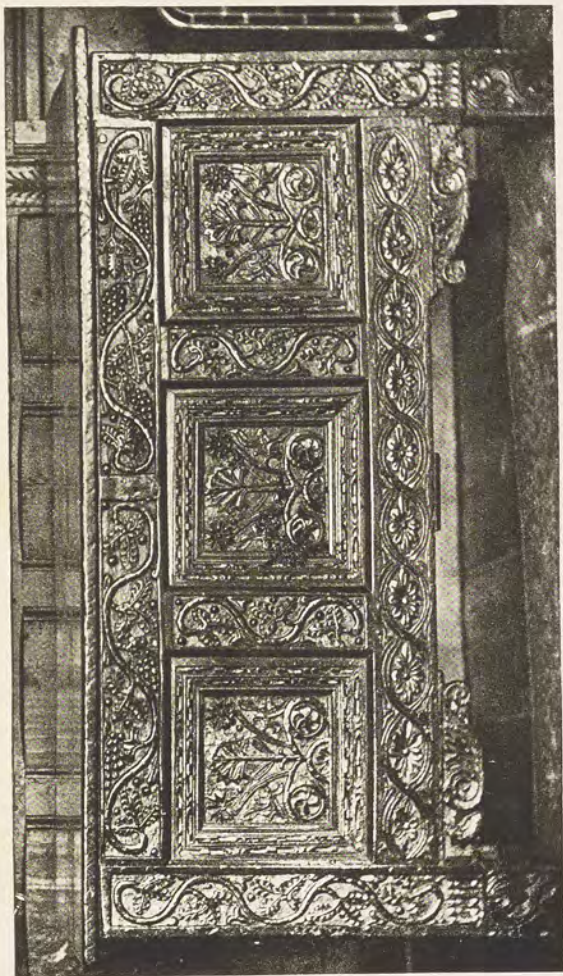
It was from chests that the early idea of a cupboard arose. Chests were very handy for stowing away vestments or documents, but when it came to cups, especially tall ones, then cupboards were desirable, and it will be remembered that we get the very word "cupboard" from the idea of a series of shelves, arranged staircase

fashion, upon which cups could be exhibited, boards one above the other, and hence the word was applied to the tall cupboards, often known as "livery cupboards" or "bread and cheese cupboards" which came in later than the chests.

These cupboards, in original condition, are very rare. Lord Granby was one of the earlier collectors of them, and he got together several that were extremely important and untouched; but they are frequently made up out of different pieces of old chests and, as a rule, these fakes have far too much carving upon them. The old ones had open-work, representing perhaps a star, or an ornamental letter or a lattice window, but otherwise the surface of the doors was plain.

The modern faker is not content with the perforated ornament, but adjacent to it puts all kinds of chip carving, which utterly spoils the effect and, to an expert, gives away the secret at once. The old livery cupboards are sometimes to be found in stables or in outhouses, having been condemned because they had fallen to pieces, or had been regarded as ugly or useless. I saw one once in pieces in a village surgery, but there was little of the original cupboard left except one important door.

These cupboards are not always entirely of oak. Sometimes the sides of the cupboard are of poplar, and poplar or other soft woods are also



A GOOD OLD ENGLISH OAK CHEST.



occasionally to be found in the chests, but it may be taken for granted that a chest which is composed partly of poplar and partly of oak is almost certainly an old one, because the forger is always anxious to say that the box he is trying to sell is all old oak. The best chests have only the carving on the front, the sides, as a rule, being plain ; the framing, even of seventeenth-century chests, is very rough and not marked by any particularly careful finish. Some of the boxes of the seventeenth century are inlaid in a kind of stiff architectural inlay, which has been called Nonsuch, because the design is said to resemble the appearance of the Palace of Nonsuch, and these chests generally belong to a period of about 1680.

I believe that the popular family name of Arkwright was originally derived from the makers of the old oak chests, which in ancient inventories are alluded to as "arks," and that the early "arkwrights" were the people who were responsible for making up these boxes for church purposes. Elaborately carved chests are, as a rule, to be avoided. They are quite easy to produce ; the price asked for them, as a rule, is out of all proportion to their merit, and they are frequently compounded of pieces of oak from oak buffets or cupboards ; and the reverse is also the case with the oak buffet, for its cupboard underneath is very frequently made up of the fragments of a

certain number of chests. To the real collector, plain chests are the attraction and, if they are unrestored, broken or damaged, they are more likely to be genuine and worth securing. There are but a few of them to be found, and they are well worth searching for.

CHAPTER XXXVII

SEALS AND SEALING-WAX

AT a friend's house a while ago I saw an interesting collection of old seals. Not the impressions in wax, but the actual seals such as men used to wear in the eighteenth century in bunches on a fob chain, and very pretty many of them were. The bulk, however, were in what the jewellers call "red" gold and not yellow gold, showing that they belong to a period of late Georgian art rather than to an early time, such as that of Queen Anne, when the gold used was much yellower in tone than it was in later days.

The majority of the stones used in them were of carnelian—a mineral that people so often miscall cornelian, forgetting that it derives its name from its resemblance to flesh and hence it should be spelled with an "a" rather than an "o"—but some were engraved on topaz, others on a white carnelian, and some on white quartz.

Old seals are of various sizes, some quite small, others very large and massive. Generally they have but one sealing side, but sometimes the stone swings over and is engraved on both sides.

Occasionally one finds beautiful armorial bearings engraved upon them, but, as a rule, the emblems are classical or French, and sometimes amusing and clever in their wit.

In a collection I recently looked at, there were two or three fitted with whistles above the seal such as I had never seen before. Another collection had three or four of those very rare seals made of Chelsea porcelain—charming little figures, very delicate and dainty, surely made in order to show how prettily these toys could be produced rather than for actual use.

Then, again, another collector had been making a speciality of a different kind of seal—the long-handled ones, where the handle is three inches or so in length, and the seal was intended to lie on the writing table for use when necessary. One or two of these were in fine lumps of bloodstone ; a very handsome one was in smoked quartz ; one or two of the handles were jade, others clear, transparent rock-crystal ; and many, very beautifully worked, were in ivory. Sometimes pieces of Oriental carved ivory were used, but at other times the ivory was evidently worked in this country, from the plainness and simplicity of its detail.

In the same collection I found Wedgwood handles for seals ; lilac or blue jasper, with slightly relieved decoration in white ; a strange one that was made, I imagine, at Bristol or Nailsea, of green glass, with tiny bubbles in it ;

a cleverly wrought one in iron, representing a squirrel and a nut enclosed in a piece of foliage ; some jet ones, which I imagine came from Whitby ; and several bearing the marks of the Dresden porcelain, with one special rarity that was quite clearly made at Sèvres. All of these were, of course, the table seals and not intended to be worn, but amongst them was a very fine one indeed of Egyptian onyx. In some of them the engraving was actually of the same material as the handle, the whole being one solid piece ; in others the engraving was a separate piece of stone enclosed in a frame of gold work, attached to the handle.

Then there are occasionally to be met with those odd seals that open at the top and have a series of little steel stamps, which can be used as desired, fitted into the framework at the other end. These are generally very fanciful in their devices and sometimes amusing. I imagine that there was no serious importance in them—they were toys rather than tools. It did strike me, however, as a rather curious thing, that the collector of these long-handled seals, of which he had quite an important series, did not himself know how to make a proper impression with them, but adopted the usual habit of lighting a match and burning a piece of sealing-wax, very much to waste, with a series of black spots on the hot wax and various drops of wax scattered in

different directions, and then hurriedly put the seal on it, with the result of a very poor impression.

Years ago the art of sealing used to be taught as one of the accomplishments that it was desirable that a person, especially a lady, should understand and appreciate; and one notes amongst the Sheffield-plated things various cases for these long, twisted tapers which were used for the purpose—and in their bright green colour, inside the silver basket-shaped mount, looked very pretty; and also small lamps, which were used for the same sort of purpose. As a matter of fact there is nothing so good for making a seal as a small spirit lamp; but to push the piece of wax into the flame of the candle, taper or lamp, and as soon as a bit of it is melted dab it on to the paper, and then to melt another and similar piece, to try to gather the shapeless mass together and then, with great haste, dab on the seal, is pretty sure to produce an impression that is no credit to the sealer, instead of one that might be quite worth looking at and satisfactory.

A careful sealer, on the contrary, never thrusts his wax into the flame but holds it just above the point, and moves it round and round in his fingers until he has a sufficient amount of the wax soft and melted. He can increase the velocity of the evolutions until there is plenty of

it ready to put on to the envelope, taking care that the drops—or as they are vulgarly called, “kisses”—do not fall about in all directions. Then, when the wax is brought to its proper haven and turned round with its lower edge away from the sealer, it is gradually brought upright in the hand, the molten part rubbed round slightly so as to level it on all sides, the circle being gradually decreased until one ends in the middle of it, and then, if it is not quite free from bubbles or lumps, it may be held quite lightly half an inch above the flame of the taper or lamp until the bubbles disappear.

There is no tremendous hurry in putting on the seal: if you put it on when the wax is very liquid you get a deep frame and a very poor picture. You should hold the seal just for a moment over the point of the taper, try it on the back of your hand to see if it is really warm, place it again over the flame, and then put it down very lightly, press it steadily, and then as steadily remove, and the result should be much more satisfactory than the usual seal. Some persons prefer just slightly to breathe on the surface of the seal, others touch it on their hair or face: both results having exactly the same effect, producing the thinnest possible atmosphere or dampness between the wax and the seal, so that the wax does not become attached to the body of the seal.

The most beautiful seals, of course, are those

where the centre part of the seal is coloured with Chinese vermilion of the very finest possible quality. As a rule the seal engraver produced his perfect impressions on a piece of stout cardboard, which he can actually hold over the flame of the lamp and then he has an excellent opportunity for a good result; but one cannot do that with an envelope, and therefore a different course has to be adopted—a polishing brush is needed and a camel's hair one as well, and the tiniest possible morsel of fine pomatum, about the size of a pin's head, is just rubbed over the surface of the polishing brush. The seal is warmed, the polishing brush passed across it two or three times, the camel's hair brush dipped in the vermilion, which is very lightly and very equally applied to the face of the seal so as to leave the thinnest possible mask of powder over every part of it. The loose vermilion is then blown off with the breath so that it does not lodge in the hollows, the wax is melted, and the seal very carefully applied as in the ordinary way; but the impression that should result is infinitely finer, because the border retains the natural brilliancy of the wax and the centre part, where the seal has touched, is of a deep, red vermilion.

There appear to be so many collectors of seals nowadays that it seems a pity that the art of sealing a letter should have dropped out, and perchance these few explanations may be deemed

of some service. Some persons always seal their correspondence. One friend of mine invariably does so, determined that no chance should be given to any inquisitive person for the opening of his letters. There are several persons who invariably wear seals as fobs, especially with evening dress; and on most library tables, especially in good houses, there can be found handled seals with initials, or the name of the house, or the armorial achievements. That being so, it is surely a pity that proper care should not be taken in using these beautiful seals, because the joy of seeing a well-executed seal on an envelope is a considerable one, and there is no reason, unless one is very busily engaged, for the seal to be a carelessly executed impression. Naturally, when people seal up parcels, it does not much matter how the seal is produced, provided the impression is fairly clear; but, when the envelope is going to a person of some importance and the seal is a good one, why should not the impression be equally good? There are still a few persons—very few, I suppose—who make use of quarto notepaper, fold it, wafer it, and seal it in the way that I myself was taught to send a letter from very earliest days, envelopes being regarded as rather unnecessary and commercial. Persons who do fold their paper in this fashion—amongst whom, it may be mentioned, was the late Lord Salisbury—keep up the art

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of sealing, and the result is a very pleasant
one.

Seals are interesting things to collect ; there
are many of them to be got in jewellers' shops
and, sometimes, in pawnbrokers'. They are quite
pretty to have and to use, and if properly used can
be a source of much satisfaction.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

BEAUTIFUL FRUIT-BASKETS

A FRESH interest has recently been taken in the productions of the old English potteries, and choice examples are fetching higher prices than they have ever done before. Collectors are beginning to turn a fresh attention to the beautiful openwork, creamy ware made in Leeds in the latter part of the eighteenth century, under the auspices, first of all, of Mr. Green, then, later on, of a firm composed of his own people and, finally, of a Mr. Hartley in conjunction with them, the pottery continuing in existence down to 1820. Nothing more delightful was ever turned out in any English pottery. The fruit-baskets and dishes, especially those which had beautiful openwork cutting, were remarkable for their grace and shape, and their charm of quiet, creamy colour.

Sometimes they have been confused with very similar baskets and dishes made by Wedgwood, and it is not easy, from a description, to distinguish between the two; but Leeds ware was glazed with a glaze which has a distinct green tinge about it, and when it is thick or in small

lumps about the foot of the piece, or at its base, the greenish tinge can be quickly distinguished. Moreover, it is exceedingly light in weight, and a connoisseur will detect it almost by such means alone. It was not only made in the soft, creamy earthenware that had no decoration upon it, but it was made with a transfer decoration, both in black and in colour.

There are also pieces decorated by hand with charming borders, sometimes inscribed—having, perchance, reference to Nelson or to Wilkes, or to the actual family for which the pieces were made—and sometimes with dates, ranging from about 1792 down to about 1812.

Amongst the most beautiful pieces were the baskets made to receive roasted chestnuts, which in the eighteenth century were much more frequently served at table than they are in the present day. Amongst the very rarest are the water cisterns. These are sometimes the subject of inquiry. Is it possible, it is asked, that these can be actually intended for water? Are they, by any chance, tea-urns, or for chocolate? The explanation is quite an easy one, however, because, in the days when the factory was at work, the water of Leeds was by no means satisfactory and the wealthier of the inhabitants used to import water specially for tea from Helbeck, and these cisterns, in the old catalogues of the Leeds ware, are specifically called "Helbeck water cisterns."

Leeds ware was particularly concerned with table decoration, both for dinner and for tea. There are charming teapots, sometimes with twisted ribbon handles ; kettles of a similar kind, and the stands upon which they were placed so arranged as to receive a nightlight or a lamp ; and there were cups and saucers and the other adjuncts for the tea-table, or Tea-board service, as the Leeds catalogue termed them.

Then, for the more important meal, Leeds ware potteries especially catered, and some of the most notable pieces were the centre pieces for sweet-meats or fruit ; and those with hanging baskets attached to the branches are particularly desirable acquisitions, when perfect fetching very large sums. They generally have terminal figures, but sometimes there are three figures on the top, known as the " Three Jolly Boys of Leeds."

Then there are beautiful candlesticks, open-work baskets, with or without covers, for holding the fruit, melon-holders, pots with covers and stands for sugar, sometimes made in the shape of a melon, and at other times circular or oval, while, if they happen to possess their original ladles, they are of exceptional value.

The Tea-board services sometimes included a long, shallow, oval dish with its cover, which was intended for Yorkshire scones or girdle cakes, and which is quite a delightful piece ; and light was afforded on the meal not only by the candlesticks,

but by some very sumptuous vases which the pottery turned out, in which the top ornament could be reversed, revealing a candlestick in which a small candle could be placed. Then there are drug jars to be obtained, on which, in pleasing lettering, the name of the drug is represented ; there are loving-cups with two handles, some of which commemorate the notable people of Leeds or of the nation ; and there are those very pretty tulip or crocus vases, which are like five fingers coming out of a centre, and in which it was a favourite thing in the eighteenth century to plant small bulbs, different in colour, and so have a charming group of flowers for the table.

There are small jugs to be obtained, taller ones for hot milk, coffee and chocolate pots, cruet frames of many sorts with their cruets, stands for soy—somewhat different to those used for cruets—urns which must have been intended for chocolate, and different kinds of vases—circular ones for holding a large quantity of flowers, and very small ones that would hold a single bloom. Besides all these, there are numerous shapes of plates, almost all with beautiful perforated borders and sometimes with a fan-shaped decoration in the centre ; and there are smaller ones, such as shells and shell-shaped dishes, for holding sweet-meats ; and single cruets, such as single peppers or mustards that were never intended to stand in any cruet at all, but by themselves on the table.

Fortunately we know a great deal about the history of the Leeds pottery. There was a rare book issued concerning it in 1892, and there are some of the old catalogues still remaining with drawings, especially one which came out in 1794, and which alludes to the *compotieres* and salad dishes, or ragout dishes, and the terrines (as the word is spelled), dishes and soup plates, butter tubs, candlesticks, chestnut baskets, and even to such things as inkstands and shaving-basins, eye-cups, radish-dishes, wafer-boxes and sand-boxes, water cups and ice-bowls, and two pots specially prepared for pot-pourri.

All these things are still to be obtained occasionally, and in a dark oak cupboard or against velvet few things are more delightful than a collection of creamy Leeds ware. In using the pieces on the table it must not be forgotten that they were not intended to stand on the white linen tablecloth now in use. That spoils their effect. They were made to stand on the polished surface of oak or mahogany tables, or even more often on those bright red and blue tablecloths that are occasionally to be seen in the form of napkins or small cloths, and which had bright chequer patterns, more like a tartan, upon them. On these the Leeds ware sets forth its triumphant charm of colour.

CHAPTER XXXIX

OLD CLOCKS

FEW things in the way of domestic furniture have increased so much in price in recent years as clocks. I do not think that they have reached their top price yet. There are many collectors ; there are very few *fine* clocks. Many of the clocks on the market have been altered, changed, interfered with. It is more and more important that collectors should know how to determine a genuine old clock and something of its value.

The long case clocks came in in about 1665. They were preceded by the hanging wall clocks, which were in demand between 1600 and 1670, and which were, as a rule, thirty-hour clocks and with but one hand. They were pull-up clocks ; and those that have been altered with interior mechanism, doing away with the weights and the long pendulum, are quite unimportant and not worth having at any price.

When one comes to deal with the long case clock there are, first of all, the square-dialed ones, and, much later on, those with the arched dial ; but very early square-dialed ones had the

space where the spans generally occur quite plain. Then, a little later on, the corners of the square dial were engraved and, later still, they were decorated with four span ornaments. These were, as a rule, carefully chased and water-gilt; in modern or altered clocks they are of the roughest possible manufacture, frequently stamped out, and the engraving coarse and unsatisfactory.

As regards the hour circles, the very earliest of all did not have the minutes marked on the inside rim. That rim inside the figures was just two narrow lines. It was not until about 1670 or 1675 that one finds it graduated off for minutes. It was at about the same time that the inner circle for the second hand began to be introduced, and in the earliest clocks that seconds circle is set rather away from the hour circle—for example, in clocks by Tompion and Knibb, and in the earlier clocks by Quare, the seconds circle does not touch the large hour circle; but, in about 1680, a little change took place, and the seconds circle was pushed a little closer up to the hour circle and touches it just below the figure XII.

Then, in the early clocks, the name of the maker is at the bottom of the hour circle, and not in the middle of the circle. I believe Quare was the first to put his name in the middle of the hour circle, and he did it on a little inserted oval space. In the earlier ones, especially in those by Tompion, the name appears either in English or

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in Latin (generally Latin) below the figure VI,
in the hour circle; and in many of the best
clocks by this maker there is a charming en-
graved border all round the square dial, with a
space at the bottom left plain, on which the
name of the maker is engraved.

Then, again, the best of the early clocks have
little shutters covering over the winding holes.
By the way, tall case clocks without winding
holes are not satisfactory. There are some to be
found that were wound up by pulling up the
weights by means of chains, as one did in the old
lantern clocks, but if this occurs in a long case
clock it makes it quite valueless to a collector—it
is a degenerate clock.

As a rule, the numerals on the circle are, in
the old clocks, very much as they are in the
modern ones, having four strokes for the figure 4,
but if, in lieu of these four strokes, one finds IV,
then one knows that the clock has a different
system of striking, striking two bells on the
Roman numeral system, a plan introduced first
of all by Joseph Knibb, in order to save the
wear of the mechanism of the clock involved in
so many strokes on the bell. In the oldest clocks
the winding holes are very largely apart, nearer
to the hour circle than they are in the modern
ones, and if one finds the two winding holes
pretty close to one another, and near to the
centre of the dial, the clock is not a good one.

Quare was, I think, the first to introduce fine silvered circles, and in all the early clocks it is important to notice that the hands are of the right length. I cannot explain in an article of this kind the difference between the right hands and the wrong ones. One recognises the right hand by experience, and by the various sketches given in books on clocks, but the minute hand should just touch the two engraved lines that are round the figures, and the hour hand should just touch the very base of the Roman figures. The seconds circle is very often not inside the dial, but on the extreme edge. This is particularly the case with the clocks by Quare, where he made a broad, graduated seconds circle, outside the hour circle, and put Arabic figures, 10, 15, 20 and so on, to distinguish the different divisions. In the earliest clocks the bells are not true circles, having a certain amount of squarish shape about them, Knibb's especially.

Then, the genuine old cases have a system of raising the hood on a clocked spring, so that the clock can be properly attended to and wound in satisfactory fashion. This raising of the hood is an almost certain mark of a genuine fine clock.

The existence of the separate circle for the Arabic numerals, introduced first of all by Quare, became general in the eighteenth century, and almost all the best clocks of that period (take, for example, those by Davis, Bradley, Gretton,

Gould and such makers) have all, more or less, elaborate minutes circles, in some cases marking each minute separately, in others dividing them off into tens.

The arched dial came in about 1720-25. Clocks are not often seen with arched dials before that date. All the best long case clocks were made before 1765. Nothing that is much later than that is of any particular importance. The finest clock cases were not inlaid ones. The very best clocks—those by Tompion, Graham, Quare—are invariably in plain cases; in some cases the clocks are rigidly plain, because the great makers preferred to devote their labour to fine mechanism. It has been said that the early clock-makers never gave anything else but timekeeping mechanism, but this is not entirely the case, because I have heard of a clock by East with several bells, and a clock by Tompion that plays tunes, but these are most exceptional, and must have been made to special orders, the early makers being, as a rule, determined to devote their attention to perfect timekeeping mechanism.

The earliest Tompion clock was made about 1709, and that has an arched dial, but the arched dial was the square form with the arch added, and not the arched dial made complete; the joining of the two parts of the dial can clearly be seen, the arch was only an ornament, it has no other function. In the arched dial between 1725

and 1735, the hour ring is divided into quarters between each numeral on the inside edge. After 1735, this arrangement disappears.

Some of the tall cases were in lacquer—green, brown and, very, very rarely, red. I have never heard of one in blue lacquer or in cream lacquer, and I am very much disposed to think that neither of those two forms of lacquer were eighteenth-century work at all, but have been invented for the benefit of collectors later on.

In addition to grandfather clocks, there are what are known as grandmother ones, much smaller, exceptionally small in size, and these are very much rarer than the tall case ones. Some of the grandest of the clock cases are of fine mahogany.

When we come to deal with bracket clocks, we start with a period of the time of Charles II, and some of the earliest good bracket clocks were the work of Edward East, who was the King's clock-maker, and who was also responsible for some exceedingly good watches. The earliest bracket clocks were architectural in their shape, and generally either veneered with ebony or made of solid pear-tree wood, stained black, and the movements were generally of very fine work, with good hands, narrow hour circles, with minute divisions on the extreme outer edge, beautiful chased corner-pieces and dials water-gilt.

The lantern clocks were, of course, the very

earliest of all, and there are examples—the work of Edward East, Payne and other makers—going back to *circa* 1600. These lantern clocks had to stand on a bracket, owing to the space required for the long pendulum and the fall of the weights, and it was because of the space that these bird-cage clocks occupied that the arrangement was introduced for a true bracket clock, where no long pendulum or weights were required.

Collectors are urged to be very cautious in buying clocks, and to thoroughly examine any clock offered to them, and, if possible, take advice. A fine clock is worth a great deal of money and is, moreover, an excellent investment, because it will go up in value. A poor clock is not worth having at any price, it will not be a good timekeeper and it will never sell again for a substantial price. Two or three really fine clocks are a much more satisfactory possession than any number of ordinary ones. It is not every house that can take the long case clocks, and, consequently, the bracket clocks are more popular. Sometimes these have two bells—a “ting-tang,” as it is called, for the quarters, and the hours on a separate bell, sometimes five, seven or eleven bells, operated by a spiked drum, in the fashion of a musical-box, but a great many of the bracket clocks on the market are absolutely rubbish, simply made to sell, and of no importance at all to the collector.

CHAPTER XL

SHEFFIELD PLATE

AMONGST objects of domestic utility, few have so rapidly increased in value within the last few years than those made in Sheffield in a period which extended down to 1790, and known as Sheffield plate.

There was, in the eighteenth century, a demand for objects of beauty for the table less costly than solid silver and better in appearance than pewter, and at the very moment when this demand existed, the discovery was made by Bolsover in 1742 which led to the manufacture of Sheffield plate. By it, he was able to produce an imitation silver, beating out a thin layer of the precious metal, placing it on a copper foundation and fusing the two metals together by the action of heat. This was the starting-point for what presently became a great and prosperous trade.

In referring, however, to Sheffield plate I want to confine my attention to what is known as the "copper mount" period, which extended to about 1790, and have nothing to say about the later work, which was known as the "silver mount"

period. Fine Sheffield plate of this first period is distinguished by extreme beauty of design and, provided it has not been tampered with, it has a full resemblance to silver.

It is entirely different to what is known as "electro-plate," but unfortunately the two things are often combined. A piece of Sheffield plate which has sustained a great deal of wear, so much so that the copper foundation shows through, is often electro-plated with lamentable effect, because the importance of the piece is ruined, and the electro-plating is never satisfactory, for the marks where the original silver has worn away are always apparent in time.

There are certain ways by which real old Sheffield plate can be known, and the principal test for it, as Veitch has pointed out in the chief work on the subject, is the "seam test," for there are always seams on all good pieces of Sheffield plate-marking where the joining took place. The seams are not conspicuous, and have to be sought for, but if the piece has been electro-plated all these seams are covered up.

Then, again, the depth of the silver applied to the copper is a test, and if a piece of doubtful Sheffield plate is scraped very gently on the foot or in some place where the damage does not matter, if the first scraping or two reveals the metal the piece is almost certainly a forgery. The real expert claims to be able to detect Sheffield

plate by its colour, and such is certainly the case, for when one is accustomed to look at Sheffield plate, whether it is genuine or not can be detected almost in a moment.

The Sheffield plate manufacturers were fortunate in the artists who designed their work, and I am inclined to think that some of the most beautiful things ever made in England were the jugs, baskets, candlesticks and cruet frames that were produced by these manufacturers.

Amongst the rarest pieces of all are those which were produced by wire work, when thin sheets of silver were attached to drawn copper wire, and from this wire salt-cellars and cake-baskets, sugar-baskets, muffineers and mustard-pots were made, and, above all, the wonderful epergnes which are occasionally still to be found, with their smaller baskets hanging from them. The wire was sometimes made circular, sometimes flat, occasionally three-sided, or even square, and from it were prepared the cruet-frames, baskets and mustard-pots about which collectors are now so enthusiastic. From 1775-85 was the very best period for Sheffield plate, and particularly noticeable at that period are baskets that were intended to have glass linings, generally blue or red, and were to contain sugar. Sometimes they are on an oval foot, sometimes on three upright pieces. They are to be found urn-shaped and both oval and circular. Frequently they are perforated so

as to show the glass through, and they are almost invariably of delightful classic shape.

Then, again, there are the hot-water jugs, for which there were several very good designs, resembling classic vases and moulded on the same sort of lines as those used for Adam decoration, with the pendent swags of drapery upon them which add so much to the charms of that particular sort of design.

Fortunately, a few of the original makers' catalogues have survived, notably a very fine one issued by Nathaniel Smith & Co., in which there are all kinds of illustrations showing the various objects which this firm was producing. There are four delightful sugar-basins or cream-bowls, some charming cruet-frames, and frames for soy bottles, a whole series of different salt-cellars, some fine inkstands, those interesting bottle-stands known as wine-slides, decanter-stands or coasters, some of which were mounted on wheels, several tea-pots and tea-caddies ; and of all these we know not only the design, but the price at which they were made, and that they were actually produced, so that a collector, having this catalogue before him, may hope, some day or other, to be able to obtain some of the beautiful objects it represents.

Candelabra were the subjects of very special care on the part of the Sheffield plate makers. It was the period, it will be remembered, for



BASKET ON THREE FEET, FITTED WITH A
FLINT GLASS LINING. *Circa 1785.*

BASKET ON OVAL FOOT, FITTED WITH A
BLUE GLASS LINING. *Circa 1785.*

By kind permission of Mr. H. N. Veitch and Messrs. George Bell & Sons.



candles, and at important tables there were two or three candelabra, each holding two candles and, in some cases, on the removal of the central ornament, capable of holding three. Great pains were bestowed upon the design and manufacture of these candlesticks, and they are frequently objects of extreme beauty, graceful and delightful in design.

We do not exactly know what the escallop shells were made for, but there were a great many of them turned out by the manufacturers, so that they must have been very popular in their time, and we have no particular use nowadays for the taper stands—oval, openwork cases of wirework which contained the wound-up green taper.

These must have been very popular in their day, for they are often referred to, but they are not very easy to obtain nowadays, and collectors have to be particularly careful in purchasing them as so many modern reproductions have been made.

The candlesticks were very seldom loaded with lead, but the modern reproductions almost always are so loaded. The original ones were loaded with pitch, finished at the base with a thin piece of wood, which was covered with green baize.

The common remark that parts of Sheffield plate work are in silver does not apply to the best kind of Sheffield plate. It does apply to the second period, when many handles and feet and knops and sockets were made of silver ; but the finest and

best pieces of Sheffield plate belonging to the earlier period were entirely composed of silver beaten on to copper, and have no lumps of solid silver upon them. Some of the most beautiful pieces (and incidentally some of the rarest) are what are known as "potato rings," because they were used on the table to hold the wooden bowl in which potatoes cooked in their skins were served up in Ireland. The makers' name for them was "dish stands," and the genuine ones were always different in size top and bottom, so that they could be used for holding dishes of varying sizes, according to the positions that they assumed on the table. Their use for the wooden potato bowl was only one of their uses, and not perhaps the chief one, although it has given them their name ; but in the days when polished tables were almost invariably in use, it was important that the hot dishes should be kept away from the table, and hence these table-rings were introduced, upon which the dishes could be set.

There are very attractive two-handled cups ; there are tea-caddies, both upright and square and octagon ; there are tankards and dish-crosses, on which dishes were supported, very much in the same way as the potato rings supported the dishes, only sometimes these crosses are provided with a lamp in the centre that the dishes might be kept hot. Then there are the salvers and wine-coolers, what are known as argyles, in which there

is a receptacle for hot water in order that the gravy may not be cooled down by the use of the cold ladle ; sauce tureens, pepperpots, stands for spoons, and, perhaps as beautiful as anything, cream jugs with tall wire handles. These jugs are very often exquisitely graceful in design, and particularly precious.

Some people say that they would prefer, when they are purchasing objects of this kind, to pay more money and have solid silver. Such an idea is, no doubt, an agreeable one, but many of the beautiful designs in Sheffield plate are not to be obtained in silver at all, although no doubt they could, given time and opportunity, be copied ; but the finest pieces of Sheffield plate, in good condition, are not only as beautiful as silver, but represent an important English industry of the eighteenth century, examples of which are becoming increasingly rare, and are more pleasant for use on the table than silver by reason of their greater lightness, their extreme daintiness in design, and for the fact that, moreover, they are Sheffield plate, and are therefore not interesting to the ordinary thief or burglar. He is not going to waste his time over pieces of Sheffield plate, however important they may be. He prefers solid metal that can be quickly melted up for his own purposes.

Perhaps the best collections of Sheffield plate in existence were those belonging to Mr. Veitch,

who has written so much about it, to Viscountess Wolseley, and to Mrs. Johnson Brown. A great many of the best pieces are marked, and by the marks it is possible to find out in many instances who were the manufacturers, and in that way to identify the actual date.

The number of the collectors of Sheffield plate is rapidly increasing, and, as might be expected, this increase in collectors has led to a similar increase in faking, so that far greater care must be taken in purchasing examples of Sheffield plate than was at all necessary a few years ago.

CHAPTER XLI

OLD FURNITURE

IN view of a recent action in the Law Courts, it may be well to give some hints to my readers concerning the purchase of old English furniture. It is necessary first of all to explain that nothing can supersede experience and that a fairly intimate knowledge of the furniture of the period is requisite before a collector can claim to be an expert. He will not, for instance, look for an Elizabethan hat and umbrella stand, or an early Stuart sideboard with a cellaret, nor will he expect to find walnut lamp stands richly carved in the manner of bed-posts, and if he sees a mahogany or walnut bureau with a great deal of carving upon its flap, he will immediately recognise that it has no interest to him.

First impressions count for a great deal in forming an opinion about furniture, because the most difficult thing that a forger has to copy is the effect of the polish—what the expert calls the “patina.” Pieces of old furniture were treated with beeswax and turpentine, and polished with what our grandparents called “elbow-

grease," producing an entirely different effect from a modern French polishing. In French polishing, the grain has to be filled up, and a mirror-like effect of polish obtained on the furniture in very even fashion, whereas the old polish has a depth and solidity, and an inequality that at present defies reproduction. In consequence, the first idea of the expert is, "Does the thing look right?" "Is it such as the original cabinet-maker would have made it?" It may be desirable to remove one of the handles from, say, a chest of drawers, in order to see whether the wood is of a different colour underneath the handle to what it is on either side, and if, on the removal, it is found to be even in colour all over the front of the drawer, it may generally be taken for granted that the piece is not an old piece, and that the polish has been put on lately, because, in the really old pieces, the handle would have covered up the wood, and the wood underneath it would have been of quite a different colour to what it is near by.

Taking the same chest of drawers as an example, it will be well to look to the lining of the drawers. If they are of pine, the piece is certainly faked, because pine was never used for drawer linings of good walnut or of early mahogany furniture until about 1780, and then only occasionally. Pine becomes reddish in time, and a little cut with a penknife would quickly determine whether the

linings of the drawers have been stained to a particular colour, and what they were originally made of. The way in which the drawer-frames are joined together is important, the old drawer frames of oak had oak pegs in their tenons, and the system of dovetailing, impossible to explain in the limits of a chapter of this sort, was different to that adopted in the present day.

The screws used in a piece of furniture have to be examined, and by the aid of a strong glass, a hand-made screw can quickly be detected from a machine-made one. The collector must not jump to the conclusion that all gimlet-pointed screws are machine-made, and date from the establishment of the firm of Nettlefold and Chamberlain, because, prior to the history of that firm, there were gimlet-pointed screws, but as they were made by hand there are variations in them—slight eccentricities in thread, and an irregularity in their edges.

Then the expert needs to have some knowledge of the grain of wood, because apple, pear and lime are all used in modern fakes (one is almost compelled to use the verb as a noun, although, strictly speaking, it should be an adjective) in lieu of mahogany, and they are stained to the colour of mahogany. This can sometimes be detected merely by the veining of the wood, but very often a little bit has to be cut away, to show what is underneath.

Pieces of furniture that are decorated with floral paintings are generally of satin wood, and the old satin wood was a straight-grained wood of quite pale lemon colour, not, as a rule, a rich florid wood of a deep golden colour; and the painting upon it should be very closely examined with the pocket glass, because old painting is never even in surface: in places it sinks in, where the wood is a little soft, whereas new painting has exactly the same quantity of relief all over the panel, and the difference between a wreath of flowers painted on a satin wood panel a few months ago and that painted on an old piece of furniture can often be detected by the tips of the fingers without any further examination. In mahogany furniture there are divergences of weight; the modern mahogany is much lighter to lift than furniture made with old wood.

The old West Indian mahogany was a very heavy, close-grained wood, the modern Honduras is quite different. Where there is much ornamentation, it should be examined with great care, whether it is applied or carved. In most instances, the raised ornamentation on old furniture was carved from the solid wood. In modern fakes it is always applied; it is too costly to carve it from the solid, and then one comes to a broad general rule that the old manufacturers and carvers were much less particular about the quantity of wood they wasted than are the modern

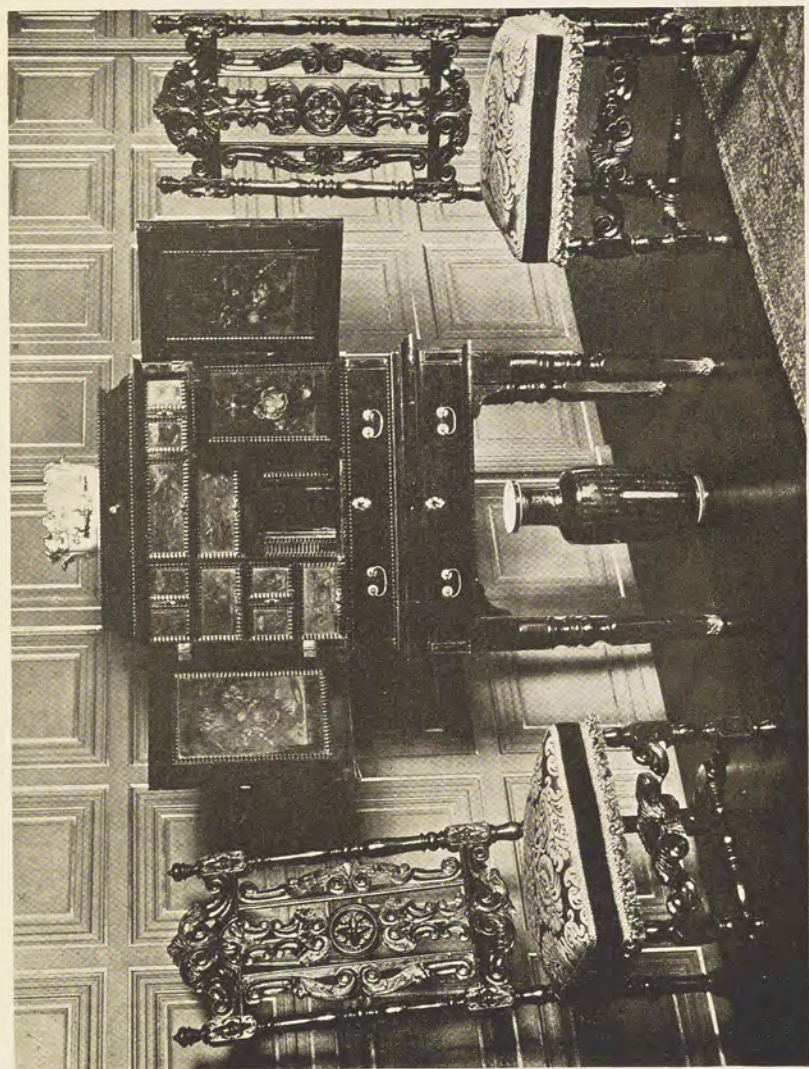
fakers. There is a certain sense of breadth about their work. It is not cramped. The maker had plenty of wood, and plenty of time, and would obtain a satisfactory price for his piece of furniture, and in consequence, he did not stint his material. The modern copyist does stint it, and loses that quality of breadth and freedom so apparent in the old furniture. This is particularly the case with carved work. The old carving was very freely done, and a great deal of wood was cut away, almost carelessly, and moreover the carving was irregular and eccentric ; two opposite pieces did not exactly balance, and there was a freedom about it, a life, an ease, an under-cutting that modern work entirely lacks.

Where there are ornamental metal mounts, known as "ormolu," on, for example, a fine writing-table, they must be very carefully scrutinised, and as a rule it is well to have one of them off and look at it under the glass, because there is a granulated surface to the back of modern ormolu work entirely different to the surface of old work. Moreover, old ormolu work is actually *ciselé*, and has almost the appearance of jewellery. It is finely and delicately done ; the mounts by such artists as Gouthière, Caffieri, and those on cabinets by Oeben, Riesener, or David, are works of art, worth careful examination, engraved with tools by hand, as also are the signatures, and not produced in moulds or stamped by any electric

process, as are the imitations. It is really signs of mechanism that one has to look for in faked furniture—mounts turned out by mechanical process in large numbers, carving done by fretwork machines, where the edges are almost sure to have the effect of the machine still left upon them, particularly where the fret has been turned round at a corner, because when the turning takes place the fretsaw was still going, whereas the workman would have of course stopped using his saw when he turned the fretwork round.

Questions of colour have to come in; old furniture fades according to the position that it has occupied in a room, and one has to form an idea from the fading whether it has been stood out in the sun to artificially fade it all over, or whether one sees where the rays of light have fallen, and where they have faded the wood, and, in contradistinction, where the shadows have come and the wood has not been faded, and in the places where the light would not naturally reach, one has to look for the dark, rich depths of colour which old furniture should show in such positions.

Modern gilt work can often be detected by the use of a little turpentine, which will quickly reveal whether the gilt has been recently applied. Very rich and highly-figured veneers are to be doubted. The older furniture had much simpler veneers, with much less figuring upon them than many of the fakes possess, and veneered furniture



A FINE ITALIAN CABINET AND TWO WILLIAM AND MARY CHAIRS,
AT HENGRAVE HALL.



requires to be carefully examined at its edges because modern veneers are very thin, and exceedingly level in their thickness throughout, whereas old veneers were thicker, and were uneven, thinner in some places than they were in others.

Modern lacquer work can often be detected by the aid of a pin, because if it pierces the lacquer it is certainly new ; old lacquer is of a hardness almost inconceivable, and becomes harder and harder as years go on. Modern lacquer is soft, badly made, and has a sort of gummy effect which it is not easy to explain unless one has a sample of it to show.

Then, one has to have a knowledge of the tools that were used in the eighteenth century, because there are many tools—chisels, gouges, etc.—used nowadays which the eighteenth-century joiners did not possess, and the marks of these modern tools are often perceptible, and sometimes give away the whole trick.

The most difficult fakes to detect are those where parts, say, of a set of chairs have been used throughout the new set—a leg here, an arm there, part of a back somewhere else—and where the faker announces that there have been repairs, whereas, as a matter of fact, he has cut up two or three old chairs and distributed the material through the new set so as to entrap the unwary. Here the penknife and the glass come in handy, because the new wood (often of two kinds) can

generally be detected, and the new carving never exactly copies the old. It is tighter and harder, and done with less freedom, and, moreover, the colour is too even throughout the whole of the furniture. The faker also has generally forgotten the effects of sunlight in a room where chairs are constantly being moved about, sometimes in the dark corners and sometimes in front of a window.

Worm marks are very cleverly copied, but as a rule modern worm marks have no dust at the bottom of them, or if they have the dust is fresh and bright in colour, and the use of a pin on which a touch of gum has been put will sometimes bring up, from what appears to be an old worm mark, some powder of quite a different colour to the wood, showing that the worm mark is quite recent.

In furniture with handles, changes of fashion have made changes of handles. Old pieces very often show that underneath the drop handle the wood has been filled up with a peg, where at one time was a knob. The forger does not bother about this. He makes his piece of furniture and fastens on its handle. He forgets that seventy years ago the handles were taken off and knobs were put instead, owing to fashion, and then the knobs were taken away again and handles put back again.

In old marqueterie clock-cases it is important to notice that the marqueterie work was always irregular, the two sides often did not balance, and

it was never cramped in design ; the new work almost always is.

In every instance, however, one has to fall back upon the general effect at first. Does the thing look right ? Is the colour right ? Is it faded in parts where it would naturally be faded ? Are the details as they should be, or do you find a Chippendale bookcase on a Queen Anne stand, or a design used in old walnut furniture which was not introduced till the late eighteenth century ?

Tapestry on the tops of tables must be very closely looked at. It has often been re-worked, and silks with quite modern colours used in. Carving and inlaying were never overcrowded on old furniture ; plenty of plain space was allowed. The fakers almost always overdo it. The legs of tables must be looked at, if there are castors. The old ones show signs of having been cut away to fit in old heavy castors, now often replaced by modern ones, and it may generally be said that no piece of furniture should be bought at a high price unless every opportunity is given for looking at it underneath and examining it minutely.

There was a maker of Flanders jugs who knew that if a jug full of water was frequently set down an edge of the foot would become worn. He forgot, however, that a jug would only be set down on its front edge when held by its handle, and he wore away, in his forgery, the back edge, where the jug could not possibly be set down, just below

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the handle. The furniture forger very often
makes very much the same mistake.

Let me strongly recommend a recent book on
"Walnut Furniture," by R. W. Symons. Every
collector of old furniture should possess it, and
also Mr. Herbert Cescinsky's three volumes on
English eighteenth-century furniture, and his
important volume on clocks.

CHAPTER XLII

CAKES AND ALE

EATING and drinking occupy a considerable amount of special concern, especially at Christmas-time, and it might interest some persons, especially younger members of the family, if the question of collecting, or at least bringing together, with various articles of food received some attention with local connections. There would be geographical interest ; in some cases an interest connected with folk-lore ; and often there are scraps of local history that account for the fact that we give to certain foods the names of certain places.

For example, Durham mustard is an accepted title in grocers' lists, because of the fact that in Durham mustard was first of all prepared ; but I am inclined to think that there is no mustard made in Durham now, but practically it all comes from either Colman's or Keen's.

There are numberless cakes, however, that are always identified with their place of origin, and our tea-table could be well spread. There are the "Maids of Honour" coming from Richmond, Eccles cakes, Shrewsbury cakes, Grantham

biscuits, Banbury cakes, Dundee cake, Guildford manchets, Bath buns, Bristol gingerbread, Nottingham buns, Bath Olivers, Scotch bun and Scotch shortbread, and probably there are many more.

The Bath Oliver is always said to have had its origin when Bath was a place to which the fashionable world went, and something in the way of a biscuit was desired to eat after the draught of unpleasant water had been swallowed. Hence it is said that Dr. Oliver invented this delightful biscuit, which is still made, I believe, from his original receipt, and can only be obtained from his legitimate successors.

Supposing, for example, the meals for a whole day were planned on lines of something of this sort, and that we started at breakfast time with Cambridge sausages, obtained perhaps at Harrod's and having no connection with the University city; but just remembering that sausages are constantly a favourite Sunday morning meal, because when they were first made near to Cambridge they were brought into the city for Saturday's market and purchased for Sunday morning. In lieu of these we might, perhaps, purchase in London Bologna sausages (hence our word Polonies) or German sausage, and could feel sure that neither of them had even a remote connection with the places with which they were first associated.

We should very likely have on the table Vienna

bread and French rolls. We might have a Melton Mowbray pie, that very probably would have come from the place where they were first made and where there are still a large number of manufacturers of them. We would have some Yarmouth bloaters that probably came from Yarmouth, and perhaps a slice from a Bath chap, finishing up with a little Dundee marmalade.

Then, when we came to the midday meal or evening dinner, we could have Canterbury lamb or Ostend rabbit, Dover sole or Greenwich white-bait; and amongst our vegetables we might have Brussels sprouts and Jerusalem artichokes—the last absolutely misnamed, the word simply being a corruption of an Italian word which refers to the plant turning round towards the sun; there might also be Spanish onions over which we would put a little Cayenne pepper, although possibly none of our Cayenne pepper comes from the place from whence it was first of all introduced, but from some other place in South America; and we could have Irish stew and Yorkshire pudding (both made in London), or a Norfolk dumpling, and a little later on, a Welsh rarebit, which has had no connection with Wales; and then various kinds of cheeses, such as Dutch cheese, or Stilton cheese (which has nothing to do with Stilton, but used to be sold in Stilton market by the farmers who lived in the neighbouring towns), or we could have Colwich cheese, or a

Bakewell pudding ; and then, perhaps, as a sweet, a Norfolk biffin, an apple delicacy hardly known out of that county.

For our dessert there are Brazil nuts, which we do still import from Brazil, Jordan almonds, which certainly have nothing to do with the River Jordan now, whatever they may have done in the past, Carlsbad plums and Smyrna figs, and either Tunis or Tafilat dates, with Blenheim Oranges, which were certainly first grown at Blenheim, but I am told there are no apple-trees left of the particular class in the place now.

A tea-party has already been referred to, but there are many other Scottish buns or scones that come from the Land o' Cakes that could be added to our list, notably the Pitkeathly bannocks, a kind of shortbread baked in thick cakes in which pieces of orange peel and almonds are put, and which certainly originated in the little village in Perthshire which has a reputation for a mineral spring. Then we could add those cubical chunks of plain gingerbread or treacle cake, which are still called Chester cakes ; and there could be Parleys, or Parliament cakes, a kind of gingerbread or ginger biscuit baked in long rectangles with scalloped edges, and of which children have always been very fond. There is Somerset apple cake, there are the saffron cakes of curious yellowish colour baked at Saffron Walden, and there are all kinds of odd Cornish cakes, many of them

also yellow from the use of saffron, and there is Swiss roll and that delightful rich gingerbread known as Yorkshire parkin, while, if we were having tea in Cornwall, there is almost sure to be on the table some kind of pasty, because it is said that Cornish people put anything and everything into a pasty, and the legend runs that the Devil himself dare not cross the boundary into that county, lest they put him in too !

On the tea-table we could also have Mocha coffee, which very likely came from Brazil, and China tea which quite probably was grown in Ceylon. Our Demerara sugar very likely came from Jamaica, and the oranges may be called St. Michael and have come from the Canaries, and the raisins Malaga and have come from Greece.

Children would delight in Everton toffee or Harrogate toffee, and then there is Edinburgh rock, and the big pink and white rock that one finds on sale in every seaside place, and which, in Southend is called Southend rock, and in Brighton, Brighton rock—in each case, as a rule, having the name of the place introduced into the appearance of the sweetmeat itself.

One of the oldest sweetmeats in England is that known as a Pomfret cake, first made and still prepared at Pontefract from the locally grown liquorice plant—a large-sized black lozenge, well known to all children in that particular district. Other children would very likely have what they

would call Spanish liquorice, which originally was introduced from Spain but now almost always comes from Italy ; and they might have various dishes made of Indian corn, grown in the States, certainly adding to their pleasures that of a box of Turkish delight, which they would very likely get from Selfridge's and which would have been made on their premises.

As for drinks, there would be an almost unlimited choice ; but, if we only wanted those which were produced in the place, the name of which they bear, we could have Burton ale or Dublin stout, Devonshire cider or Plymouth gin.

It would surely be an interesting subject for investigation, the origin of many of these local foods. Probably some sort of ecclesiastical origin is concerned in some of the cakes—for example, the Cloth-workers' Company in London still give away, at their Corpus Christi feast, a large spiced sponge-cake, known as the Corpus Christi cake, which is made from some special and favourite recipe, and which is mentioned far away back in English history, and, in fact, I think Pepys alludes to obtaining this particular cake at Cloth-workers' Hall. Chaucer alludes to the manchet. Whether he means what is now called in Surrey the " lardy roll " is another matter, but the whole subject is of interest, and, in many instances, the more or less remote origin is important from a folk-lore point of view.

We use very many words now that have lost their meaning. Our meal would very likely be served in a room covered with a Brussels or Kidderminster carpet, neither of them having any connection whatever with the place the name of which they bear, and it is, moreover, very doubtful whether any carpet was ever woven at all at Brussels. Perchance, however, there might be a Turkey carpet on this floor, and that might have been made in Asia Minor or Anatolia, and the chairs covered with Morocco leather that has never had any connection whatever with the Moors, but has been prepared in London.

The blinds of the windows are very possibly called Venetian, the Oxford grate was perhaps made in Birmingham, and the so-called Dutch tiles made in the Potteries, while some of the chairs may be called Windsor and have come from High Wycombe ; the table may be polished with French polish in London and blocked with Norway pine from Scotland, while perhaps the curtains of the room will be of Lyons silk and the chairs covered with Genoa velvet, both substances woven at Braintree ; and on the table may be Irish linen made in Cumberland, Venetian glass blown at Stourbridge, and the delightful dish of Devonshire cream perhaps came up from Cornwall.

Still, there are the words and the names, telling us a good deal if we chose to investigate them, concerning history and origin, and though the

original meanings may have perhaps passed away, the story of these words is worth investigating, and there is plenty of interest to be gathered from doing so. We know that our German silver did not come from Germany, we are pretty sure that the Sheffield cutlery had nothing to do with Sheffield, but in words like these are embodied little bits of history, and investigation yields many an interesting result.

CHAPTER XLIII

BATTERSEA AND BILSTON ENAMELS

SOME day or other, when Mr. Ward Usher's treasures are arranged in the Municipal Museum he has founded in Lincoln, there will be an opportunity of looking at some of the most beautiful bits of Battersea enamel that have ever been collected.

I was with him when he bought many of his pieces, and I advised him about several of them. We had a dispute once about a piece which he said was Battersea, and which I said was French. It was a long needle-case, and, after he had bought it, he dug away at the very bottom with a knitting-needle, and, to his supreme disgust, discovered a little French label, and forthwith sent the needle-case back again to the dealer, who had guaranteed it Battersea. Two of his finest pieces are the pink mustard-pots that he bought in 1900 from Mr. Dudley Macdonald. Very precious, and one of the most interesting, is a little thimble-case that belonged to Charlotte Brontë that he bought at a sale of Brontë relics, and which he always thought he would give to the museum at Haworth, but he could never quite

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persuade himself to part from his delightful little blue treasure decorated with its charming sprigs of roses.

My own grandmother used to carry in her pocket a little nutmeg box of Battersea enamel, with a tiny grater just inside the lid. I believe she only carried it because her mother did so, for in her time nutmegs had gone down in price and were not so precious as they were before. People used to dust their muffins with a tiny particle of nutmeg, and hence the tiny boxes and the tiny salt cellars that succeeded them were called muffineers.

The manufacture of these charming little enamels was started in about 1750, at York House, Battersea, and the owner of the works was Mr. Janssen, who was Lord Mayor of London in 1754, and afterwards Sir Stephen Janssen.

Horace Walpole gives us the date in his letter to his friend Richard Bentley, dated September 18th, 1755. He says, "I shall send you a trifling snuff-box, only as a sample of the new manufacture at Battersea, which is done with copper plates." The snuff-boxes are rare. There were probably not very many of them made, because they were costly to produce, and the decoration upon them, which was done from copperplate engravings by means of transfer to the surface of the enamel, required extreme skill. What are generally to be found are the tiny patch-boxes, usually with little

steel mirrors inside the lids, often plain in colour, delightful rose-pink, blue and green, and very pale blue, with a spotted, so-called linen pattern decoration; sometimes having inscriptions on them, more like those of the old valentines, or the statement that they are "a fairing present." On others there are portraits, and very often pretty little scenes, such as rural lovers, and symbolic figures with Cupids. Occasionally they carry French mottoes on them, but there was a French manufacture of the same sort of things at a much later date, and the productions of this factory are much smoother, more clean in the inside, rather too highly finished, and the enamel is laid on too thin. The probable reason for the French mottoes on the old ones was the employment of a Frenchman named Ravenet, who worked at Battersea for a long time.

The largest collection I ever saw belonged to Mr. Kennedy, and was dispersed after his death, and some of his finest patch-boxes had been picked up for a shilling apiece in the old days when it was possible to buy treasures at that price. Lady Charlotte Schreiber, who left the great collection in 1884 to the South Kensington Museum, was even more fortunate, because she tells us that on one occasion, when she was buying some rather choice things, she had her handbag filled with some odds and ends of Battersea enamel, which the man saw she admired, but which

he regarded as quite trumpery, and unworthy of any notice at all.

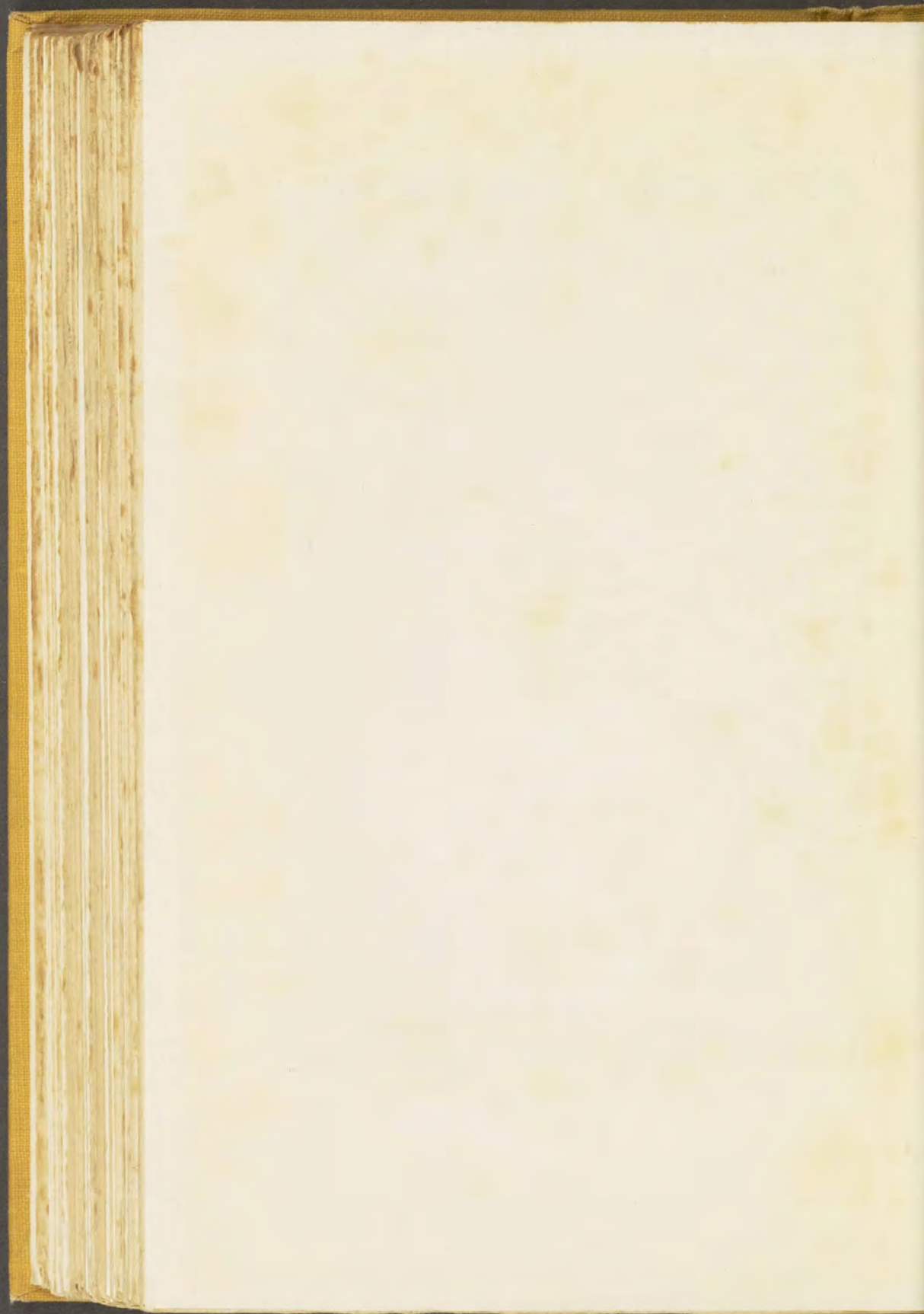
The prettiest things ever made in Battersea were the étuis, dainty little boxes with chased gilt metal mounts, and sometimes containing all the original implements for which they were made. Mr. Usher had a beauty, which had all its implements, and a needlecase which possessed its old needles. He also possessed the Nelson box dated 1805, with a trophy of arms. Probably a great many such boxes were made at the time, but very few have survived.

In 1900 there was a great run on Battersea enamel and immediately the faker set to work in Brussels and Paris. On one occasion I saw quite a large collection of so-called Battersea enamels, purchased by a Frenchman, in which I do not believe there were two specimens that had ever come from Battersea at all.

The rarest things to get are the candlesticks and the writing desks and inkstands. Some of the tops made for canes will open, so that strong scent can be put in, in case that the physician who carried the cane was visiting a patient with a dangerous illness. Some also of the patch-boxes have false lids, and on the inner one is occasionally to be found a picture. Sometimes these pictures are not very respectable, and are wisely hidden in the lid. Mr. Kennedy had two, which contained very suggestive paintings, done by Cosway, the



A FEW FINE EXAMPLES OF OLD BATTERSEA ENAMEL.



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miniaturist, when he first began to work as an artist. Occasionally the *étuis* were made to order. There are two or three at South Kensington, unique, intended to have been given to Mrs. Chambers and to Miss Day, the lady who sat to Sir Joshua Reynolds, and who is mentioned in Horace Walpole's letters. Just a very few have the artist's initials signed upon them, or names upon them, but these are of great rarity, unless they happen to be plaques, in which case there are a great many that are named, some taken from well-known engravings, and others from transfers specially prepared. It is said that some of these were painted at Liverpool, and one writer on enamels claims that these were actually made in Liverpool, but the only other place where our English enamel boxes were made was at Bilston, near Wolverhampton, and the Bilston boxes were smaller, rougher, not nearly so well finished, and occasionally have little lumps of the enamel which can be felt, instead of the smooth surface upon which Battersea prided itself.

The manufacture of Battersea enamel was of very short duration. In 1756, it was all over, but a certain French enamel painter, named Roquet, is said to have carried on a manufacture of some of the things till a rather later date. Buyers of Battersea enamel must always carry a magnifying glass. The original productions were exquisitely finished, the modern ones rough and coarse. The

actual enamel surfaces, especially on the bigger pieces, such as scent bottles, cream jugs, mustard pots, and particularly on buttons, is smooth and delicate and dainty. On the forgeries made in France, it is not nearly so smooth ; it is laid on to the copper exceedingly thinly, it is poor in texture, and it is often rough and sand-like in quality.

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